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THE COMMUNIST

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Sergei Mironovitch Kirov

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For Leninism—For a Soviet America!
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THE
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SERGEI MIRONOVITCH KIROV

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Sergei Mironovitch Kirov

COMRADE Sergei Kirov, one of the best-loved and most brilliant sons of the Russian working class, has fallen under the bullets of a cowardly assassin. His murder was a political blow against the building of a socialist society in the Soviet Union, against the successful policies of the Communist Party under the leadership of Stalin. It was part of a conspiracy which included among its intended victims all the outstanding leaders of the Soviet Power, including Stalin.

The motive of the murder was the desperation of the last dregs of counter-revolution, who were forced to recognize that their last hopes were gone of stopping the triumphant progress of socialist construction under the Second Five-Year Plan. The gigantic successes reported only a few days before the murder, at the Central Committee meeting in Moscow, drove the counter-revolutionists frantic. They hoped that by their desperate act they could throw confusion into the ranks of the Party, hide from the masses in the capitalist world these successes, and encourage and provoke imperialist intervention.

The conscious workers of the entire world and in the U.S.A. join the Russian working class in mourning for our lost brother and leader. We join them also in rallying more firmly than ever under the shining banner of liberation from a rotting capitalist system. We join them in the firm and energetic stamping out of the last murder-gangs of capitalism which still reach their arms into the land of socialism.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE
COMMUNIST PARTY OF U.S.A.
EARL BROWDER, *General Secretary*

OUR Party has been overtaken by a great misfortune. Comrade Kirov perished on the first of December at the hand of a dastardly assassin incited by class enemies. Not only for us, his close friends and comrades, but for all who knew him in his revolutionary work, who knew him as a fighter, comrade and friend, the death of Kirov is an irreparable loss. At the hand of an enemy a man has perished who has given the whole of his brilliant life to the cause of the working class, the cause of Communism, the cause of the emancipation of humanity.

Comrade Kirov was a model Bolshevik, one who acknowledged no fear and difficulties in the achievement of the great aim set by

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the Party. His straightforwardness, iron staunchness, the amazing quality of an inspired tribune of the revolution, was combined in him with that cordiality and gentleness in personal, comradely and friendly relations, with that radiating warmth and modesty that is inherent in a real Leninist.

Comrade Kirov worked in various parts of the U.S.S.R., both in underground days and after the October Revolution—in Tomsk and Astrakhan, in Vladikavkaz and Baku—and everywhere he held aloft the banner of the Party and won for the cause of the Party millions of toilers in his untiring, energetic and fruitful work as a revolutionary.

For the past nine years, Comrade Kirov has led the organization of our Party in the city of Lenin and the Leningrad Province. It is impossible to give in a short obituary letter an estimate of his activity among the toilers of Leningrad. It would have been difficult to find in our Party a more suitable leader for the working class of Leningrad, one who had so skillfully rallied all the Party members and the entire working class around the Party. He created in the whole of the Leningrad organization that atmosphere of Bolshevik organizing power, discipline, love and devotion to the cause of the revolution which distinguished Comrade Kirov himself.

You have been near to all of us, Comrade Kirov, as a true friend, affectionate comrade and a reliable comrade in arms. We will remember you, dear friend, to the last days of our life and struggle and will feel the bitterness of your loss. You were always with us in the years of heavy battle for the triumph of socialism in our country, you were always with us in years of waverings and difficulties within our Party. You have lived through with us all the difficulties of the last years. We have lost you at a moment when our country has achieved great victories. In the whole of this struggle, in all our achievements, your share is great, there is much of your energy, force and ardent love for the cause of Communism.

Farewell, our dear friend and comrade, Sergei!

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THE Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) informs the Party, the working class and all toilers of the U.S.S.R. and the toilers of the whole world, with the greatest sorrow, that Comrade Sergei Mironovitch Kirov, an outstanding leader of our Party, an ardent, fearless revolutionary, a beloved leader of the Bolsheviks and of all the toilers of Leningrad, Secretary of the Central and Leningrad Committees of the C.P.S.U. (Bolsheviks) and member of the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., perished by the treacherous hand of an enemy of the working class in Leningrad on December 1.

The loss of Comrade Kirov, who was loved by the entire Party and the whole working class of the U.S.S.R., who was a crystal-pure and unshakably steadfast Party man, a Bolshevik-Leninist who devoted his whole vivid and glorious life to the cause of the working class, to the cause of Communism, is the severest loss sustained by the whole Party and the land of Soviets during the past years.

The Central Committee believes that the memory of Comrade Kirov, the glowing example of his fearless, untiring struggle for the proletarian revolution, for the construction of socialism in the U.S.S.R., will inspire millions of proletarians and all toilers for the further struggle for the triumph of socialism, for the final annihilation of all enemies of the working class.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE ALL-UNION COMMUNIST PARTY (BOLSHEVIKS)

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For Leninism — For a Soviet America!

By ALEX BITTELMAN

ON THIS, the eleventh anniversary of Lenin's death we renew our pledge of allegiance to the struggle for a Soviet America; to the Communist International, led by Comrade Stalin, and to the Communist Party of the U. S. A.; to our Socialist Fatherland, the Soviet Union, the chief fortress of the world revolution, the center of a new world system, the system of Socialism.

THE INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF BOLSHEVISM

The idea of storming capitalism is maturing in the minds of the masses in the capitalist world. The United States is no exception. The General Strike of San Francisco and the National Textile Strike are direct evidence of this fact. Indirect evidence is found on all hands: in the further fascization of the N.R.A. and its newest demagogy to "reform" capitalism; in the growth of more open fascist formations and movements, as was disclosed by the Butler expose and as is manifested by the fascist activities of Coughlin, Long, and by the anti-Communist incitements of the Hearst press. Monopoly capital in the United States, sensing the coming of the revolutionary storm, rushes more rapidly to fascism and war; and in doing so, it singles out for its first attack the Communist Party of the United States, the vanguard of the American proletariat and the leader of all oppressed. This is the meaning of the anti-labor and anti-Communist legislation planned for the forthcoming session of Congress by the Dickstein Committee under the promptings of the most reactionary and chauvinistic circles of the capitalist class. So-called "vigilantes" are once more coming into action (Racine, Wisconsin) by way of creating the necessary "atmosphere" for putting over the new capitalist conspiracy against the working class and its Communist Party.

The idea of storming capitalism is maturing in the minds of the American masses. From this arises the widespread and evergrowing interest in the question of—*The Way Out.* The feeling is settling among the masses that it is no longer possible to live under capitalism, that a change—a fundamental change—must be made. It is on this feeling that Roosevelt is playing with his manifold varia-

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tions of the New Deal. It is this feeling which he exploits for masked fascization and war preparations. It is on this feeling of the masses that Sinclair is playing, seeking to direct it for capitalism into the safe channels of a "Left" New Deal. And the fascist movements of Coughlin and Long are brazenly playing with and exploiting the very same urge of the masses towards a new order, attempting to mobilize sections of them as the shock troops of monopoly capital for open fascist attacks upon the growing revolutionary movement.

At the same time, ever wider circles of the more advanced proletarian and non-proletarian masses in the United States are coming to see the correctness of the *Communist program for the way out*—the Bolshevik way, the way of the Socialist revolution and of a Soviet America. To this conclusion the class conscious and fighting masses of the American proletariat are moved by a growing realization of the following fundamental fact: the reformist and Social-Democratic way of class collaboration has paved, and is paving, the way for fascism; the Bolshevik-Leninist way of class struggle has led to the victory of the proletarian revolution in Russia and to epoch-making Socialist achievements in the Soviet Union. German Social-Democracy has paved the way for Hitler, "Left" Austrian Social-Democracy has paved the way for Dollfuss and his successor, Schussnig; the reformism of the Labor Party in England has enabled British imperialism to retain its tottering rule. On the other hand, and during the same period, the Bolshevik Leninist way has made the Soviet Union an impregnable fortress of Socialism and the world revolution, and is making the Communist Parties in the capitalist world the very backbone and leader of the united front of the masses against fascism, fascization, and war. Confronted with reformism and Bolshevism, the masses in the United States, in ever larger numbers, are making the choice for Bolshevism, for Leninism.

Reformism in the United States, as everywhere, is making desperate efforts to stem and obstruct this indisputable trend to Bolshevism, to the revolutionary way out and to a Soviet America. Standing at the extreme Right of the reformist outfit, William Green and the reactionary bureaucracy of the A. F. of L. are hanging on to the N.R.A. as "the way out". And though it becomes ever more difficult for them to continue to present the New Deal "as a genuine partnership of Labor and Capital", because the masses of auto, steel, textile, and marine workers have already had very instructive experiences with this "partnership", the reactionary bureaucrats of the A. F. of L. are now prattling about a "reformed" and "reorganized" New Deal. What we wish to stress in this connection is that even Green, Lewis & Co., can no longer afford to stand up among the

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workers as open defenders of capitalism; that they are compelled, by way of "Left" maneuvering, to pretend to be accepting the mass urge for a fundamental change and to propose a "new" way out. It is not at all excluded that, as we succeed in exposing *these* "Left" maneuvers, they will resort to even more "radical" subterfuges in order to try to stem the trend to Bolshevism among the masses.

The Right Wing of the Socialist Party is in effect indistinguishable from the reactionary bureaucracy of the A. F. of L. Whatever observable difference there is, can be explained by the "traditional" difference between reformists in the unions and reformists in the political parties of the Second International: the former do not, or rarely, use Socialist and Marxian phrases; while the latter do use such phrases. Green and Lewis, on the one hand, and Oneal-Waldman, on the other, typify pretty closely this "difference". Green and Lewis do not habitually write articles under such headlines as "On the Road to Power". They rarely, if at all, refer to Marx and Engels. Green more often takes as his text the Bible. Oneal, on the other hand, discusses such questions as "the Road to Power" (*American Socialist Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 3) and takes as his text Marx and Engels. Yet their fundamental positions are the same. Both champion bourgeois democracy as against Soviet working class democracy; both combat the Bolshevik way out; both serve faithfully the New Deal.

And why does Oneal find it necessary now to discuss the question of power and to "use" Marx and Engels for this purpose? Because the more advanced workers are seeking an answer to the question of power and are moving to the *Bolshevik* solution of this question, and Oneal seeks desperately to stem this movement. The membership of the Socialist Party is moved to the conclusion that *Soviet Power* is the working class answer to the question of the way out. Hence, Oneal is forced to take up the question of power; and, by distorting Marxism, by slander and lying, he undertakes to steer the radicalized workers back into the channels of bourgeois democracy. The activities of the Trotzkyite counter-revolutionists, and their struggle against the Soviet Union, are inspired by the same purpose of obstructing the movement of the masses to the Bolshevik way out.

It is important, however, to establish clearly the *method* whereby Oneal is trying to accomplish his aim. The need for this will become fully apparent when we discuss the treatment of the question of power by the "Militants" and by the "Revolutionary Policy Committee". What is Oneal's method? (1) He negates the international significance of the Bolshevik way out. This he does by asserting that the question of the road to power by the American prole-

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tariat cannot be solved "with a slogan or by some rigid formula to be applied to all countries" (*American Socialist Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 3). This has no doubt reference to the Comintern slogan of Soviet Power *for all* capitalist countries which Oneal fights against. (2) The armed uprising is impossible, it cannot be victorious in view of "the powers of destruction in the possession of the ruling classes". (3) He admits the need of revolution in countries where fascism is in power but it must be not a Socialist revolution but a "revolution in the sense of 1848", that is, a bourgeois revolution for the restoration of bourgeois democracy. And he adds: "It is obvious [?] that the program adapted for a fascist country is not adapted for the non-fascist countries". And (4) the whole question of power is not on the order of the day in the United States. He says: "the road to power in a country like the United States with its small and weak movement is not an immediate problem" (*Ibid*). It will be observed that Oneal does not dare to attack the idea of Soviet Power for the working class of the Soviet Union; *all* he is trying to show is that this is not applicable to the United States. Fearing, however, that this may not be convincing, Oneal attacks next the possibility of a victorious armed uprising to secure power, whether or not in the form of Soviets. He then concedes that in fascist countries the way of revolution may be the only way, but makes sure that this must be a revolution to restore bourgeois democracy. And, finally, if none of the previous "arguments" will convince, he has a last one: the whole question of power is not a practical question of an immediate nature.

We urge the "Militants" who follow Thomas and also the members of the "Revolutionary Policy Committee" to compare their respective positions with that of Oneal in order to see to what extent and in what way they have really begun to free themselves of the deadening reformist ideology of Oneal—deadening, that is, for the class struggle and for the revolutionary movement. We shall here try to indicate the lines of such an examination.

Take the Declaration of Principles adopted by the Detroit Convention of the Socialist Party and subsequently by a referendum of the membership. The document, and the circumstances surrounding it, are most significant: To point merely to this fact that, while this Declaration is programmatically a reformist document, it has nonetheless become one of the main objects of attack by the Right Wing of the Socialist Party; or another fact that, while officially the Declaration is the banner of the "Militants", of the Thomas group, the latter peculiarly feels apologetic about its adoption, and would seem to want to forget about it, as of a bad dream. This is true especially of Thomas. What is the secret of these contradictory

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circumstances surrounding the Declaration of Principles? It is, namely, first, that *behind* this Declaration stands a Leftward moving rank and file which is departing from reformism and is seeking the path of revolutionary class struggle. It is, secondly, that the Declaration contains parts which constitute definite obligations to wage a daily struggle against fascization and war preparation while others *seem like* an abandonment of the reformist positions of bourgeois democracy and a move in the direction of revolutionary struggle for power. It is, thirdly, the most essential programmatic feature of the Declaration which is to find a "middle ground" between bourgeois democracy and Soviet Power, and, like all middle grounds, constitutes an acceptance of bourgeois democracy. The rank and file of the Socialist Party welcomed the Declaration for those of its features which look like a departure from reformism and towards revolutionary struggle, and it is for this reason that the Right Wing hates the document and wages an open struggle against it. Thomas, on the one hand, *fears* the Declaration of Principles primarily because of the Leftward moving rank and file behind it; and, on the other, clutches at it as *a new weapon* (the "middle ground" essence of it) to try to stop this Leftward process.

To us, Communists, the most significant thing in all these contradictory developments is the Leftward moving rank and file, and our best answer to it is the more intensified and flexible struggle for the united front. The united front is our proposal for the mobilization of the maximum forces of the working class and all toilers for the daily struggle against fascization and war preparations. And because of this, the united front is at the present time (the maturing of the world revolutionary crisis) the main road along which the masses will be prepared for the struggle for Soviet Power under the leadership of the Communist Party. Consequently, we must take the utmost pains in our agitation and propaganda to show the Socialist workers and the workers generally, that the road of the Declaration of Principles is *not* the road to power; that there is *only one road*, the Bolshevik road, the one that leads to Soviet Power in the United States.

The Declaration of Principles presumes that there is a different road (or several different roads), neither Bolshevik nor reformist. But this presumption is totally baseless. The Declaration itself does not point to a single historical example which would demonstrate the possibility of a "third way". Certainly, the experiences of the world proletariat since November, 1917, (and throughout the history of capitalism) are rich enough and varied enough to enable us to reach very definite conclusions on the question. Hence, he, who, in the face of these experiences, pretends to be uncertain as to *which* is the

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only road to power, or who still continues to claim that there are *several* roads, is either abandoning the fight for power or, which is the same thing, remains on the positions of reformism, the same positions that pave the way for fascism.

Haim Kantorovich supplies what may be called an eye-opener to the position of the Thomas-"Militants" on the question of power. He writes: "There is no one way in which the proletariat may get political power. It may get political power as a result of the utter collapse of the existing state machinery as in Russia; as a result of a revolution brought about by a defeat in war as in Germany; as a result of a successful revolution as in Spain; or as a result of an electoral victory as in Great Britain" (!) (*American Socialist Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 4). The utter illiteracy of this sort of "analysis" should not obscure the thoroughly reformist position which it embodies. This we must bring out into daylight especially as the author of this analysis is an outstanding Thomas-"Militant" who, no doubt, had a good deal to do with the drafting of the Declaration of Principles. It would appear, from Kantorovich, that there was no revolution in Russia; just the "utter collapse of the existing state machinery". The Bolshevik revolution, it would seem, had nothing to do either with accelerating and bringing about this collapse or its Soviet State. This is Kantorovich-Thomas history.

The cloven hoof of reformism is, however, seen particularly clearly in Kantorovich's characterization as *working class power* the following events: the Social-Democratic government in Germany, the Labor Party government in England, and the bourgeois-Socialist coalition in Spain soon after the overthrow of the monarchy. At a time when growing masses of honest Social-Democratic workers look upon the role of their parties in those days with horror and shame; when many of these Social-Democratic workers in Germany, Spain, and England have already turned (or are turning) away from their parties precisely because it has become clear to them that the performances of these parties when they were in power, as well as when they were in "opposition", have paved the way for fascism and fascization; at this time, Kantorovich unblushingly parades Social-Democracy in power as an example of the non-Bolshevik road to power. And it is this kind of stupid and malicious reformism that lies at the "theoretical" base of the Declaration of Principles. The road to "power" outlined in the Declaration is conditioned by two "*ifs*". "If" number one: "if the crisis comes through the denial of majority rights after the electorate has given us a mandate, we shall not hesitate to crush by our labor solidarity the reckless forces of reaction and to consolidate the Socialist state". This presumes the following: (1) that the American capitalist class *may* allow itself

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to be displaced from power and to be expropriated from the means of production which it now owns without resort to force and violence; (2) that power may be won in a parliamentary way; (3) that the capitalist State can be used by the proletariat "to consolidate a Socialist state".

It is true that these *formulations* are somewhat different from Oneal's but the reformist substance is the same. Both oppose the Bolshevik way for the American proletariat, proceeding from the denial of the *international significance* of Leninism. Both reject the slogan of Soviet Power for the United States. Both accept the capitalist State as a fit instrument for the building of Socialism. And as to the *organs of struggle for power,* both reject the Leninist position that these must be Soviets, urging as an "alternative" bourgeois democracy. The only thing on this point (organs of struggle for power) that differentiates the Declaration of Principles from Oneal is that the former is willing to leave the door open for other possibilities, should the American bourgeoisie itself abandon the democratic form of its dictatorship, as expressed in *"if"* number one.

The significance of this *conditional* way of solving the question of the road to power is twofold. On the one hand, it tends to cultivate the illusion that the new Socialist Party program is becoming "almost revolutionary", an illusion that is utilized by the "Lefts" to try to stem the trend to Communism; and, on the other hand, it continues to stand on the platform of reformism. This can be seen from the following consideration. The Declaration of Principles is itself forced to declare that the American bourgeoisie is fascizing its rule, that we are facing the real danger of fascism in the United States. This can mean only one thing, namely, that the American ruling class is *already* in the process of discarding some of the features of its democratic forms of class dictatorship and is *already* in the process of resorting to fascist methods of rule, masked and open.

In the face of this fact, how can anyone still be in doubt as to whether or not the American bourgeoisie will willingly and peacefully surrender power to the working class and its allies, the overwhelming majority of the population? How can anyone, who really means to struggle for working class power, still put an *"if"* to this question? Of course, if working class power is understood as a German Social-Democratic government, or a British Labor Party government, or as a bourgeois-Socialist coalition government in Spain, that is, if it is understood along the lines of Oneal, Thomas, and Kantorovich, then the *"if"* would be justified. But this is not working class power. Social-Democratic Parties in power, whether alone or in coalition with capitalist parties, have proved to be *instruments of the bourgeoisie to maintain capitalism and capitalist rule*

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against the proletarian revolutionary movements which are fighting for working class power, for Soviets. But who needs such power? Only the bourgeoisie when it finds itself unable to continue to rule by means of other parties. Thus we see that, by leaving the door open on the question of the road to power, the Declaration of Principles really leaves the door open to the same policy of reformist "struggle for power" which in Germany, Austria, etc., has paved the way for fascism.

Proceeding from the Oneal-Thomas-Kantorovich conception of "power", one could raise a number of questions about the Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota. It will be admitted that the Farmer-Labor Party, which holds the governor's office and considerable representation in the legislature, is on the road to power in Minnesota. But what kind of class power is that? It is the class power of a *third bourgeois party*, that is, a party that proposes to save capitalism by means different in part from those practiced by the old bourgeois parties, but to save capitalism nonetheless It would be beside the point in this connection to argue that the Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota is made up mainly of farmers and workers. This fact gives it the peculiarities of a "third" bourgeois party in the general mechanism of general bourgeois rule in the United States. And it is this fact that requires of the Communists a *special* approach and *different* methods of exposing the reformist nature of this party. But its role, from the point of view of power, is to try to save capitalist rule by the *reformist* road to power which, as we well know, includes the use of all the force and violence of the bourgeois State to suppress the masses. (Remember the role of the Farmer-Labor Governor Olson during the strikes of the Minneapolis truckmen.)

Nor would it be relevant to the question to say that the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota is not yet in possession of all the power of that particular state or that one state in the union cannot overthrow capitalism by itself. Both of these possible objections have already been taken care of by our observation that the F.L.P. is *on the road* to power in Minnesota. The relevant question here is *how* does it fight for complete power and for what sort of *class* power is it fighting? The answer is: it fights as a reformist organization, *through class collaboration*, (a la German Social-Democracy which paved the way for Hitler), and it seeks to save bourgeois class rule, to save capitalism. Communists, in similar positions, would utilize these parliamentary posts to bring about the maximum *immediate* improvement of the conditions of the masses, *at the expense of the capitalists* that can be reached by the powers of that state, *depending primarily upon the direct struggle of the masses*, and thus seeking to raise the struggle to the level of a revolutionary

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struggle for power, for Soviets, not only in Minnesota but throughout the country. The reformist Farmer-Labor Party utilizes its parliamentary posts, on the contrary, to help the capitalists solve the crisis *at the expense of the masses*, depending primarily upon collaboration with the capitalist class (with the New Deal), to suppress by force and violence all manifestations of mass struggle, seeking to stem and prevent the unfolding and victory of the struggle for Soviet Power. It is this conception of "the road to power" that lies at the theoretical base of the Declaration of Princples.

Equally illuminating are the experiences and lessons of the General Strike in San Francisco. The General Strike was the outgrowth of the maritime strike on the Pacific Coast. In that strike the workers fought for something that was *much less* than power: they fought for higher wages, shorter hours, the right to organize, against company unionism. They fought, in other words, for the most elementary demands of the workers. Did the capitalists willingly and peacefully submit to these demands? Did the bourgeois democratic State serve the workers in securing these elementary demands? No. The capitalists and *their* State, assisted by the reformist leaders, mobilized all forces of violence of the *democratic* State to drive the workers back to work on the old conditions. As a result of this came the General Strike, in which the Communist Party played an organizing and leading role. The immediate aims of the General Strike were to help win the demands of the maritime strike (wages, hours, union conditions). Did the bourgeoisie *then* submit peacefully to the workers? No, it was the bourgeoisie that raised at once the question of power and proceeded immediately to settle the question in its favor by the mobilization of all force and violence of the *democratic bourgeois State*, helped in this by the treacheries of the reformist trade union leaders and by open fascist attacks upon the workers and their Communist Party. Having acted like that in a strike for wages, hours, and union conditions, is the American bourgeoisie likely to act *more* peacefully and submissively when confronted with the proletarian struggle for power? This being the class nature of bourgeois democracy, is it possible to contemplate, even conditionally, the use of that "democracy" as organs of struggle for power? And if the experiences and lessons of San Francisco are not sufficient, take the lessons of the civil war methods used by the bourgeoisie and its "democratic State" in suppressing the Textile Strike.

All the experiences and lessons of the class struggle confirm the correctness of Leninism, the international significance of the Bolshevik way.

The second "*if*" of the Declaration of Principles is no less reformist. It says:

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> "If the capitalist system should collapse in a general chaos and confusion, which cannot permit of orderly procedure, the Socialist Party, whether or not in such a case it is a majority, will not shrink from the responsibility of organizing and maintaining a government under the workers' rule."

Lenin, Stalin, and the Communist International have shown, on many occasions, that the general crisis of capitalism leads inevitably to catastrophe, including the breakdown of the economic system of capitalism, intolerable misery for the masses, the inability of the capitalists to rule as of old and unwillingness of the masses to live as of old. These are some of the characteristics of the world revolutionary crisis that is maturing in the present period, though unevenly as between various capitalist countries. But Leninism also teaches that the capitalist system, no matter how deeply in crisis, will not collapse by itself: it will not fall, if it is not "dropped". Historic experience confirms this fully. But what does the Declaration of Principles say on this matter? In the portion quoted above it says that the Socialist Party will take power, "*if* the capitalist system should collapse". But suppose it shouldn't, as it certainly will not, if the revolutionary class does not *overthrow* it, then what? Then the Socialist Party will *not* take power: this is the plain meaning of the Declaration of Principles. In what, then, does it differ from Oneal? It is clear that it does not differ programmatically. This is not to say that Oneal is bluffing when he attacks the Declaration of Principles. Not at all. Oneal hates the Declaration, as was already pointed out, for the Leftward moving rank and file that stands behind and goes beyond it. He hates it for the united front obligations which the Declaration assumes for the Socialist Party and which the Thomas leadership is violating. But programmatically, the theoretical basis of Kantorovich from which the Declaration proceeds on the question of power—and which is not yet clear to the Socialist Party rank and file—we repeat, programmatically the Declaration treats the question of power in a reformist way.

Oneal says that in fascist countries revolution is permissible but it must be a bourgeois revolution of the kind of 1848. The Declaration of Principles says that in the struggle against fascism in the United States "Its methods may include a recourse to a general strike which will not merely serve as a defense against fascist counter-revolution, but will carry the revolutionary struggle *into the camp of the enemy*". (Our emphasis.) Its meaning, though purposely vague, is twofold: (a) it emphasizes and solidarizes itself with Oneal's reformist position that revolution is permissible *only* for the purpose of overthrowing fascism (or to prevent its coming to

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power); and (b) it promises in such an eventuality to carry the revolutionary struggle *beyond* the overthrow of fascism, "into the camp of the enemy", and in this the Declaration of Principles differentiates itself somewhat from Oneal. But to what extent is this a differentiation *on principle?* The answer is that it is *not* such a differentiation. The important fact is that the Declaration does not say that it will carry the fight against a fascist counter-revolution *to the establishment of workers' rule, Soviets.* This is decisive from the point of view of principle. Carrying the fight "into the camp of the enemy" *may* mean the struggle for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat if it is so stated. But when it is not so stated, and when it is accompanied (as in the Declaration) with veiled professions of loyalty to bourgeois democracy and with implicit opposition to the struggle for Soviet Power in the United States, then the phrase "carry the fight into the enemy camp" can and does mean only one thing. It means the present Social-Democratic orientation to fight in fascist countries for the restoration of bourgeois democracy by way of revolution and by way (even!) of temporary Socialist Party "dictatorship". It cannot mean anything else. That is why we say that the Declaration of Principles is programmatically a reformist document, one that rests upon bourgeois democracy.

OUR CHIEF SLOGAN IS: SOVIET POWER

The "Revolutionary Policy Committee", now persecuted by Thomas as well as by Oneal-Waldman, is itself critical of the reformist programmatic positions of the Declaration of Principles. That is all to the good, *provided* this critical attitude is allowed to lead to the positions of Leninism. But within the R.P.C. there seem to be elements of various sorts. Alongside with those who honestly seek a revolutionary program but are still blind to the fact that such a program can be only one that rests on Leninism, the Program of the Communist International, there are others (of the type of David Felix) who are concerned with using "Left" programs to stop the Leftward move of the workers. The fact that the Felixes are already resigning from the R.P.C. (as reported by the *New Leader*, Dec. 15) under the attacks of Thomas and Waldman, does not negate but confirms our contention.

What is the position of the "Revolutionary Policy Committee" to the Comintern's chief slogan at the present time, the slogan *Soviet Power?* By this we must measure (to begin with) the revolutionary quality of its programmatic declarations. In the *present* period, with the maturing of a world revolutionary crisis, it is totally insufficient merely to declare in favor of a Workers' Republic, even though in the form of "Councils" which is the English equivalent

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for Soviets. It is not difficult at all to draw up such a declaration. One has only to copy certain portions of the program of the Communist International. The "Revolutionary Policy Committee" did copy certain portions of the C.I. program but made *a poor and vague copy*. And the poor quality of the copy results primarily from the *additions to and dilutions* of the Comintern principles introduced by the authors of the R.P.C. "Appeal to the Membership of the Socialist Party" (*Revolutionary Socialist Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1).

The R.P.C. Appeal expresses itself in favor of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a means to "transform" capitalist society into Socialist society. Except for the word "transform" (capitalism is abolished, not transformed, in order to build Socialism), this is Marxism-Leninism upon which the C.I. Program is built. The R.P.C. Appeal further states that "the working class state will be an entirely new type of state based on workers' councils" and these councils "organized in direct response to a growing revolutionary situation shall constitute the basic units or organs by which the working class can carry through an armed insurrection" (*Ibid*). Except for the failure to say *clearly* that the Workers' Councils (Soviets) are also the organs of struggle for power, this declaration too is Marxist-Leninist, copied from the C.I. Program and Leninist literature generally. Which is progress, no doubt. But then there begins a whole series of qualifications and reservations which befog, and dilute with reformist waters, the quoted revolutionary principles. The result is: not a revolutionary program.

Having expressed itself in favor of Workers' Councils as a new type of State, as the concrete form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the R.P.C. Appeal finds it possible to add:

> "These councils are not *concrete blue-prints, nor are they inevitable*, but constitute the basic revolutionary idea of the state as opposed to bourgeois democratic parliament." (*Ibid*. Our emphasis.)

Well, well. . . . If the Workers' Councils are not the concrete form of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and if they are not inevitable, then what on earth are they? To say, as does the above-quoted portion of the R.P.C. Appeal, that the Workers' Councils "constitute the basic revolutionary idea of the state as opposed to bourgeois democratic parliament" is to evade totally the central question of the present epoch. Are you fighting for Soviet Power, or are you not? Certainly, in the 18th year of the existence of Soviet Power on one sixth of the earth's surface in the Soviet Union, with about one-sixth of China governed by Soviet Power, with the Communist Parties in all the rest of the world going to the masses with Soviet Power as their chief slogan, what

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serious group of persons claiming to be Marxists and revolutionists can nowadays speak of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat *without* accepting *Soviet Power* as the *concrete form of this dictatorship?* The R.P.C. proudly boasts of being "as communistic as the *Communist Manifesto*" (*R.S.R.*, Editorial, Vol. 1, No. 1). Well and good. Are you in agreement, then, with Marx's evaluation of the Paris Commune? If you are willing to follow Marx, will you follow him in his search of the *concrete form* of the dictatorship of the proletariat? You must know that Marx was not at all satisfied with resting on the dictatorship of the proletariat "as a basic revolutionary idea" which, by the way, is opposed, not only to bourgeois parliament as the R.P.C. says, but to the bourgeois *class State*. Marx did not follow the method of "inventing" or blue-printing such concrete form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. He sought to find it in the revolutionary struggle of the masses themselves. And when he did see it, *he recognized it* for what it was (in the Paris Commune), a new type of State, the concrete form of the proletarian dictatorship. This was in 1871. Now, in 1934, in the 18th year of Soviet Power, in the midst of the maturing world revolutionary crisis, the "Marxist" and "communistic" R.P.C. wants to go back to the dictatorship of the proletariat as "a basic revolutionary idea". This is not serious, members of the R.P.C. True Marxists go *forward* from the Paris Commune to the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and there they find a *fuller* and *more complete* expression of the *concrete form* of the dictatorship of the proletariat—Soviet Power—and they say together with Lenin and Stalin: *this is the form for all countries*. Together with the Thirteenth Plenum of the Comintern they say:

> "Soviet Power is the State form of the proletarian dictatorship. Soviet Power is the State form of the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasants, which ensures the growing over of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a Socialist revolution (China, etc.)."

To "accept" the dictatorship of the proletariat today and at the same time to reject or evade Soviet Power is tantamount to a rejection or evasion (as the case may be) of the revolutionary struggle for power. The members of the "Revolutionary Policy Committee" will do well to reflect deeply upon this point and to make the correct conclusions.

The argument that in the United States the proletarian dictatorship may assume other forms than Soviet Power is theoretically baseless and practically it constitutes a concession to Oneal. The R.P.C. Appeal says that "In all probability we will differ in form as determined by national peculiarities and differences" (*Ibid*). And

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what does the Appeal suggest to us by way of outline of these "differences"? We quote: "Some of the possible concrete characteristics of workers' councils are as follows: (1) The existing organizations of labor; (2) Shop committees of hitherto unorganized workers; (3) Soldiers' and sailors' committees; (4) Dirt farmers' groups, etc." (*Ibid*). Truly, the mountain labored and produced a mouse. So this is the special, the "national" form of workers' councils in the United States. And what does this accomplish? *It circumscribes and narrows down the mass democratic character of the Soviets.* Soviets in the Communist understanding, and in order to exert the maximum strength in the struggle for power and later, as the victorious dictatorship of the proletariat, must seek to embrace the *widest possible* masses of workers, toiling farmers, Negroes, soldiers and sailors. The R.P.C. Appeal *limits* the councils (Soviets) *primarily* to *organized* workers ("existing organizations", "shop committees"). In doing so the R.P.C. Appeal is *limiting their democratic character and revolutionary effectiveness.* As to existing organizations of labor, toiling farmers, etc., of course, the Soviets will draw them into the revolutionary struggle. But where is there a more all-embracing, democratic, and direct method of mobilizing the masses under the Soviets than for the latter to be elected in the factories, mills, mines, railroads, villages, farms, army and navy units, etc.? The R.P.C. Appeal seems to be totally oblivious of the fact that in a revolutionary crisis (and that is when Soviets rise as organs of struggle for power), millions of toilers, hitherto unorganized and politically inactive, come forward to organization and political action, and that the Soviets have become what they are (the international form of the proletarian dictatorship in proletarian revolutions) precisely because they have proved to be the most flexible, the most rapid and the most effective instrument for fusing *all toilers,* organized and unorganized, into a weapon of struggle for power under the hegemony of the proletariat.

The higher degree of mass organization among the workers and farmers in the United States, and the strength of reformism in these organizations, (as compared, for example, with pre-revolutionary Russia) undoubtedly presents special problems for the Communist Party in its fight for the majority of the working class. Lenin raised this question several times. At the Third Congress of the Communist International, in 1921, he formulated it as follows:

> "The more the proletariat is organized in a capitalistically developed country, *the more thorough preparations for the revolution* does history demand from us and with *the greater thoroughness* must we work towards the winning of the majority of the working class."

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This means more revolutionary work in the reformist unions, more serious entrenchment of the Communist Parties in the factories, more effective combination of legal and illegal work, more skillful exposure of reformism and struggle against it, more stubborn and flexible application of the united front. But *it does not mean*, as the R.P.C. seems to conclude, that Soviets in the Bolshevik sense are not good for the United States.

Highly illuminating in this connection are the experiences of the revolutionary movement in the immediate post-War period as well as in more recent times. It is a fact that all mass revolutionary struggles of the workers *in all countries* immediately after the World War and after the victory of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, were carried out, in one form or another, under the banner of Soviets. Recall Hungary, Germany, the Baltic countries, etc. The Chinese revolution became a Soviet revolution. And just recently, in Asturias, Spain, where the workers entered the fight through the Workers' Alliance, an organ of the united front, the fight assumed the character of a struggle for Soviet Power as soon as the movement rose to the stage of struggle for power. It is this that enables the *Communist International* Magazine (No. 22) to say:

> "Even if, in the advance towards the revolution, the proletariat of one or another country does not as yet recognize that the revolution, in order to be victorious, must follow in the path of the Soviets, nevertheless, when they rise to a higher stage of the revolution, and approach the seizure of power, they, having before them the great experiences of the Soviet Union with its world historic victories, are drawn with irresistible force towards Soviet Power."

It depends upon the revolutionary Party of the proletariat to make the masses recognize, and the sooner in the struggle the better, "that the revolution, in order to be victorious, must follow in the path of the Soviets". But the "Revolutionary Policy Committee" builds a program which would *delay the process of making the masses in the United States Soviet-conscious*. And therefore the R.P.C. program is not revolutionary.

It may be argued that, since the United States is not yet in an advanced revolutionary stage (like Spain, for example), therefore the R.P.C. program could be considered a revolutionary program although it does not make Soviet Power the chief and central slogan. But this is a wrong argument. First, because the revolutionary crisis is now maturing as *a world crisis;* and the United States is no exception. True, the revolutionary crisis is maturing in various capitalist countries not with the same rapidity and tempo. But what is it that follows from it: "The uneven revolutionary development only indicates that in the various countries we should adopt a variety

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of *methods* and develop various *approaches* for the popularization of this slogan to the broadest masses" (*C. I.* Magazine, No. 22). Secondly, the very bringing forward of Soviet Power as the central slogan in the daily mass work *itself accelerates the maturing of the revolutionary crisis in the United States.* Certainly, the "Revolutionary Policy Committee" cannot object to a slogan which accelerates revolutionary development in the United States. Then, why does the R.P.C. program fail to accept this slogan?

THE UNITED FRONT AND THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

In the united front we seek to establish unity of action of the working class, and the toiling masses generally, in the daily struggle against the capitalist offensive, against fascization and war preparations. The assertions of Social-Democracy that the Communists are not "honest" and "in good faith" in their struggle for the united front have been proved slanderous and lying allegations designed to hamper the unity of action of the masses against fascism and war. The growing advance of the united front in the United States demonstrates that ever larger masses of workers in the reformist organizations are becoming convinced of the honesty, dependability and good faith of the Communist Party.

But does this mean that we slacken in any way the fight for the chief slogan—Soviet Power? No, it does not mean that at all. It means, on the contrary, that the advance of the united front opens up before the Communists *new and wider opportunities* for spreading among the masses the slogan *Soviet Power*, the slogan of Soviet America. How are these new opportunities created? They are created in a twofold manner. Unity of action means (a) *wider masses* of workers drawn into the daily struggle against fascization and war preparations, and (b) *richer lessons and deeper experiences* for these masses in the class struggle. Remembering the Leninist principle that we can win the majority of the working class to the struggle for Soviet Power *only on the basis of their own experiences in the daily struggle against capitalism*, one can see at a glance the new opportunities that are created by the advance of the united front for the winning of the masses to Soviet Power. The more and richer the experiences of the masses with the capitalist State as an organ of class oppression, experiences gained in partial struggles for immediate needs, the quicker will these masses recognize the correctness of the Leninist position on the nature of the State and the utter falsity of the reformist position; the more easily will the masses recognize that the Soviet way, the Bolshevik way, is the only way for the overthrow of capitalist rule in the United States.

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Furthermore, it is in the daily class struggle that the masses are best enabled *to learn the true nature* of the various parties and organizations that claim to represent their interests. The united front, by promoting the daily class struggle of the widest masses, creates additional opportunities for the Communists to point out to the masses the class nature of these parties and to *convince* the masses that the Communist position is correct while the reformist position is wrong. This is how the Communists receive, through the united front, new opportunities for bringing forth their Party and what it stands for as the *only* Party that can and will lead the masses to victory and to Soviet Power.

Clearly, opportunities can be either utilized or wasted. We want these opportunities utilized to the maximum. This means, first, stubborn and flexible struggle for the united front, for unity of action. Without this, the new opportunities for winning the masses to the slogan *Soviet Power* will not materialize as widely and rapidly as they will otherwise. But given such new opportunities, *we must utilize them.* We must utilize them by spreading, within and without the united front, our propaganda for Soviet Power. While standing always in the front line of struggle for the democratic rights of the workers, we must point out to the masses that it is incorrect to designate (as is done by the Socialist Party and the reformist leaders of the A. F. of L.) a fascist dictatorship as different *in principle* from the democratic dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, but that the former grows out organically from the latter. We must further point out the falsity of the Social-Democratic position of fighting against fascism in the name of restoring bourgeois democracy, showing to the masses "that the complete defeat of fascism is possible only through the overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie in all of its forms. We must show that the proletariat can be victorious only when it will go over from the defensive to the offensive, only when the working class will struggle for Soviet Power" (*C.I.* Magazine, No. 22). And, finally, we will make full use of these new opportunities only by bringing forth the Communist Party as the only Party that can and will lead the proletariat and its allies to victory over American capitalism.

Thus and only thus shall we bring Leninism to the widest masses, commemorating in a fit way the anniversary of Lenin's death.

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The Military Program of the Proletarian Revolution

By V. I. LENIN

IN Holland, Scandinavia, Switzerland, voices are heard among the revolutionary Social-Democrats—who are combatting the social-chauvinists' lies about "defense of the fatherland" in the present imperialist war—in favor of substituting for the old item in the Social-Democratic minimum program, "militia, or the arming of the people", a new one: "disarmament". The *Jugend-Internationale* has initiated a discussion on this question and has published in No. 3 an editorial article in favor of disarmament. The theses recently drafted by R. Grimm, we regret to note, also contain a concession to "disarmament" idea. Discussions have been started in the periodicals *Neues Leben* and *Vorbote*.

Let us examine the position of the advocates of disarmament.

I

The basic argument is that the demand for disarmament is the clearest, most decisive, most consistent expression of the struggle against all militarism and against all war.

But it is precisely in this basic argument that the fundamental error of the advocates of disarmament lies. Socialists cannot be opposed to all war without ceasing to be Socialists.

In the first place, Socialists have never been, and can never be, opposed to revolutionary wars. The bourgeoisie of the imperialist "Great Powers" has become reactionary through and through, and we regard the war which *this* bourgeoisie is now waging as a reactionary slave-owners' and criminal war. But what about a war *against* this bourgeoisie? What about a war for liberation, on the part of the colonial peoples, for instance, who are oppressed by and

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dependent upon this bourgeoisie? In the theses of the "International" group, Section 5, we read: "In the era of this unbridled imperialism there can be no more national wars of any kind". This is obviously incorrect.

The history of the twentieth century, this century of "unbridled imperialism", is replete with colonial wars. But the thing we Europeans, the imperialist oppressors of the majority of the peoples of the world, with our habitual, despicable European chauvinism, call "colonial wars" are often national wars, or national uprisings of those oppressed peoples. One of the most fundamental attributes of imperialism is that it hastens the development of capitalism in the most backward countries, and thereby widens and intensifies the struggle against national oppression. That is a fact. It inevitably follows from this that imperialism must frequently give rise to national wars. *Junius*, who in her pamphlet defended the above quoted "theses", says that in an imperialist epoch every national war against one of the imperialist Great Powers leads to the intervention of another imperialist Great Power, which competes with the former, and in this way every national war is converted into an imperialist war. But this argument also is incorrect. This *may* happen, but it does not always happen. Many colonial wars in the period between 1900 and 1914 did not follow this road. And it would be simply ridiculous, if we declared, for instance, that after the present war, if it ends in the complete exhaustion of all the belligerents, there can be no national progressive, revolutionary wars "of any kind" on the part of, say, China in alliance with India, Persia, Siam, etc., against the Great Powers.

To deny the possibility of any national wars under imperialism is theoretically incorrect, historically obviously erroneous, and practically tantamount to European chauvinism: it amounts to this, that we, who belong to nations that oppress hundreds of millions of people in Europe, Africa, Asia, etc., must tell the oppressed peoples that their war against "our" nations is "impossible"!

Second, civil wars are also wars. One who recognizes the class struggle cannot fail to recognize civil wars, which in every class society represent the natural and, under certain conditions, inevitable continuation, development and intensification of the class struggle. All the great revolutions prove this. To repudiate civil war, or to forget about it, means sinking into extreme opportunism and renouncing the Socialist revolution.

Third, the victory of socialism in one country does not by any means at one stroke eliminate all wars in general. On the contrary, it presupposes such wars. The development of capitalism proceeds very unevenly in the various countries. This cannot be

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otherwise under the system of commodity production. It inevitably follows from this that socialism cannot be victorious simultaneously in *all* countries. It will be victorious first in one, or several countries, while the others will for some time remain bourgeois or pre-bourgeois. This must not only create friction, but a direct striving on the part of the bourgeoisie of other countries to crush the victorious proletariat in the socialist State. Under such conditions a war on our part would be a legitimate and just war. It would be a war for socialism, for the liberation of other peoples from the bourgeoisie. Engels was perfectly right when, in his letter to Kautsky, September 12, 1882, he openly admitted the possibility of "wars of defense" on the part of *already victorious* socialism. What he had in mind was defense of the victorious proletariat against the bourgeoisie of other countries.

Only after we have overthrown, finally vanquished, and expropriated the bourgeoisie of all the world, and not only of one country, will wars become impossible. And from a scientific point of view it would be entirely incorrect and entirely unrevolutionary for us to evade or gloss over the most important thing, namely, that the most difficult task, demanding the greatest amount of fighting on the road to socialism, is to break the resistance of the bourgeoisie. "Social" priests and opportunists are always ready to dream about the future peaceful socialism, but the very thing that distinguishes them from revolutionary Social-Democrats is that they refuse to think over and reflect on stubborn class struggle and class *wars* that are necessary in order that this beautiful future may be achieved.

We must not allow ourselves to be led astray by words. The term "defense of the fatherland", for instance, is hateful to many, because the avowed opportunists and the Kautskyists use this term to cover up and gloss over the lies of the bourgeoisie in the *present* predatory war. This is a fact. It does not follow, however, that we must forget to think about the meaning of political slogans. To recognize the "defense of the fatherland" in the present war means nothing more nor less than recognizing it as a "just" war in the interests of the proletariat, because invasions may occur in any war. But it would be simply foolish to deny "defense of the fatherland" on the part of the oppressed nations in their wars *against* the imperialist Great Powers, or on the part of a victorious proletariat in *its* war against some Gallifet of a bourgeois State.

Theoretically it would be thoroughly erroneous to lose sight of the fact that every war is but a continuation of politics by other means, that the present imperialist war is a continuation of the imperialist politics of two groups of Great Powers, and that these politics were generated and fostered by the sum total of the inter-

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relations of an imperialist epoch. But that very epoch must inevitably also generate and foster the politics of struggle against national oppression and the politics of the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, and, therefore, also the possibility and the inevitability, first of revolutionary national uprisings and wars, second, of proletarian wars and uprisings *against* the bourgeoisie, and, third, of a combination of both kinds of revolutionary wars, etc.

II

To this there must be added the following general considerations:

An oppressed class which does not strive to learn how to use arms, to acquire arms, deserves to be treated like slaves. We cannot forget, unless we become bourgeois pacifists or opportunists, that we are living in a class society, that there is no way out, and there can be no way out, but the class struggle. In every class society, whether it is based on slavery, serfdom, or, as at present, on wage labor, the oppressing class is armed. The modern regular army, and even the modern militia—even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, like Switzerland, for example—represent the bourgeoisie armed *against* the proletariat. This is such an elementary truth that it is hardly necessary to dwell upon it. Suffice it to recall the use of the army against strikers in all capitalist countries.

The arming of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat is one of the biggest, most fundamental, and most important facts in modern capitalist society. And in the face of this fact, revolutionary Social-Democrats are urged to "demand" "disarmament"! This is tantamount to the complete abandonment of the point of view of the class struggle, to the abandonment of all thought of revolution. Our slogan must be: arming of the proletariat in order to vanquish, to expropriate, and to disarm the bourgeoisie. These are the only possible tactics a revolutionary class can adopt; these tactics follow logically from the whole *objective development* of capitalist militarism, and are dictated by that development. Only *after* the proletariat has disarmed the bourgeoisie will it be able, without betraying its world historic mission, to throw all armaments on the scrap-heap; the proletariat will undoubtedly do this, *but only when this condition has been fulfilled and not before.*

If the present war calls forth among the reactionary Christian Socialists, among the whimpering petty bourgeoisie, *only* horror and fright, only aversion to the use of arms, to bloodshed, death, etc., in general, we must say: capitalist society always was and is an *unending horror*. And if this most reactionary of all wars is now

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preparing a *horrible end* for that society, we have no reason to despair. And in its objective significance, the "demand" for disarmament—or more correctly, the dream of disarmament—at the present time when, as every one can see, the bourgeoisie itself is paving the way for the only legitimate and revolutionary war, namely, civil war against the imperialist bourgeoisie, is nothing but an expression of despair.

We should like to remind those who say that this is a theory divorced from life of two world-historic facts: the role of trusts and the employment of women in factories, on the one hand; and the Paris Commune of 1871 and the December uprising of 1905 in Russia, on the other.

The business of the bourgeoisie is to promote trusts, to drive women and children into the factories, to torture them there, to demoralize them, to condemn them into extreme poverty. We do not "demand" such development. We do not "support" it. We fight against it. But *how* do we fight? We know that trusts and the employment of women in factories are progressive. We do not want to go back to handicraft, to pre-monopoly capitalism, to domestic drudgery for women. Forward, through trusts, etc., and beyond them to socialism!

This argument, *mutatis mutandis*, applies also to the present militarization of the people. Today the imperialist bourgeoisie militarizes not only all the people, but also the youth. Tomorrow, it may proceed to militarize the women. In this connection we must say: all the better! The sooner this is done the nearer we shall be to the armed uprising against capitalism. How can Social-Democrats allow themselves to be frightened by the militarization of the youth, etc., unless they have forgotten the example of the Paris Commune? This is not a "theory divorced from life". It is not a dream, but a fact. It would be really too bad if, notwithstanding all the economic and political facts, Social-Democrats began to doubt that the imperialist epoch and imperialist wars must inevitably bring about a repetition of such facts.

A certain bourgeois observer of the Paris Commune, writing to an English newspaper in May 1871, said: "If the French nation consisted entirely of women, what a terrible nation it would be"! Women and children from the age of thirteen upward fought in the Commune side by side with men. Nor can it be different in the coming battles for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. The proletarian women will not be passive onlookers while the well-armed bourgeois shoot down the badly armed or unarmed workers. They will take up arms as they did in 1871, and out of the frightened nations of today—or more correctly, out of the present-day labor

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movement, which is disrupted more by the opportunists than by the governments—there will undoubtedly arise, sooner or later, but with absolute certainty, an international league of "terrible nations" of the revolutionary proletariat.

At the present time, militarization is permeating the whole of social life. Imperialism is the frantic struggle of the Great Powers for the partition and repartition of the world—therefore it must inevitably lead to further militarization in all countries, even in the neutral and small countries. What will the proletarian women do against it? Only curse every war and everything military, only demand disarmament? The women of an oppressed class that is really revolutionary will never agree to such a shameful role. They will say to their sons: "You will soon be big. You will be given a gun. Take it and learn well the art of war. This is necessary for the proletarians, not in order to shoot your brothers, the workers of other countries, as is being done in the present war, and as you are being advised to do by the traitors to socialism. but in order to fight against the bourgeoisie of your own country, to put an end to exploitation, poverty and war, not by means of good intentions, but by a victory over the bourgeoisie and by disarming them."

If we are to refrain from conducting such propaganda, precisely such propaganda, in connection with the present war, then we had better stop using high-sounding phrases about international revolutionary Social-Democracy, about the Socialist revolution, and about war against war.

III

The advocates of disarmament oppose the item in the program, "arming of the people" *inter alia*, because such a demand, they allege, easily leads to concessions, to opportunism. We have examined above the most important point, the relation of disarmament to the class struggle and to social revolution. We will now examine the relation between the demand for disarmament and opportunism. One of the main reasons why this demand is inacceptable is that it, and the illusions created by it, inevitably weaken and devitalize our struggle against opportunism.

Undoubtedly this struggle is the principal immediate problem that confronts the International. A struggle against imperialism that is not intimately linked up with the struggle against opportunism is an idle phrase, or a fraud. One of the main shortcomings of Zimmerwald and Kienthal, one of the main reasons why these embryos of the Third International may possibly end in failure, is that the question of the struggle against opportunism was not even

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raised openly, much less decided in the sense of proclaiming the necessity of breaking with the opportunists. Opportunism has triumphed—temporarily—in the European labor movement. Two main shades of opportunism have been revealed in all the big countries, first, the avowed cynical, and therefore less dangerous, social-imperialism of Messrs. Plekhanov, Scheidemann, Legien, Albert Thomas and Sembat, Vandervelde, Hyndman, Henderson, *et al.*; second, a covert, Kautskyist opportunism: Kautsky-Haase and the "Social-Democratic Labor Group" in Germany; Longuet, Pressemane, Mayeras, *et al.*, in France; Ramsay MacDonald and the other leaders of the Independent Labor Party in England; Martov, Chkheidze and others in Russia; Treves and the other so-called Left reformists in Italy.

The avowed opportunism is openly and directly opposed to revolution and to the revolutionary movements and outbursts now beginning, and is in close alliance with the governments, however varied the forms of this alliance may be: from participation in the cabinets to participation in the War Industries Committees (in Russia). The covert opportunists, the Kautskyists, are much more harmful and dangerous to the labor movement because they conceal their advocacy of an alliance with the former under a cloak of euphonious, pseudo-Marxist catch-words and pacifist slogans. The fight against both these forms of predominant opportunism must be conducted in all the realms of proletarian politics: parliamentarism, trade unions, strikes, military affairs, etc. The principal feature that distinguishes *both* of these forms of predominant opportunism is that they hush up, conceal or treat with an eye to police prohibitions the concrete question as to the relation of the present war to revolution. And this in spite of the fact that before the war the relation of precisely *this* coming war to the proletarian revolution was mentioned innumerable times, both unofficially, and officially in the Basle Manifesto. The principal defect in the demand for disarmament consists in its evasion of all the concrete questions of revolution. Or do the advocates of disarmament stand for a perfectly new species of unarmed revolution?

To continue. We are by no means opposed to fighting for reforms. We do not wish to ignore the sad possibility that humanity may—if the worst comes to the worst—go through a second imperialist war, if, in spite of the numerous outbursts of mass ferment and mass discontent and in spite of our efforts, revolution does not come out of the present war. We are in favor of a program of reforms which is directed *also* against the opportunists. The opportunists would be only too glad if we left the struggle for reforms entirely to them, and, saving ourselves by flight from sad reality,

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sought shelter in the heights about the clouds in some sort of "disarmament". "Disarmament" means simply running away from unpleasant reality, not fighting against it.

In such a program we would say something like this: "This slogan and the recognition of the defense of the fatherland in the imperialist war of 1914-16 is only a corruption of the labor movement by a bourgeois lie". Such a concrete reply to concrete questions would be theoretically more correct, much more useful to the proletariat, more unbearable to the opportunists, than the demand for disarmament and the renunciation of "all defense of the fatherland"! And we might add: "The bourgeoisie of all the imperialist Great Powers—England, France, Germany, Austria, Russia, Italy, Japan, the United States—has become so reactionary and so imbued with the striving for world domination, that any war conducted by the bourgeoisie of those countries can be nothing but reactionary. The proletariat must not only oppose all such wars, but it must also wish for the defeat of 'its own' government in such wars, and it must utilize it for a revolutionary uprising, if an uprising to prevent the war proves unsuccessful."

On the question of militia, we should have said: we are not in favor of a bourgeois militia; we are in favor only of a proletarian militia. Therefore, "not a penny, not a man" not only for the regular army but also for the bourgeois militia, even in countries like the United States, Switzerland, Norway, etc.; the more so that in the freest republican countries (*e.g.*, in Switzerland), the militia is being more and more Prussianized, particularly in 1907 and 1911, and prostituted by being mobilized as troops against strikers. We can demand election of officers by the people, abolition of all kinds of military law, equal rights for foreign and native workers (a point particularly important for those imperialist States which, like Switzerland, more and more blatantly exploit increasing numbers of foreign workers while refusing to grant them rights); further, the right of, say, every hundred inhabitants of a given country to form free associations with free selection of instructors to be paid by the State, etc. Only under such conditions would the proletariat be able to acquire military training really for *itself* and not for its slave-owners, and the necessity of such training is dictated by the interests of the proletariat. The Russian Revolution showed that every success of the revolutionary movement, even a partial success like the seizure of a city, a factory settlement, a section of the army —inevitably compels the victorious proletariat to carry out just such a program.

Finally, it goes without saying that opportunism cannot be fought by means of programs alone, but only by undeviating efforts to

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make sure they are carried out. The greatest and fatal error committed by the bankrupt Second International was that its words did not correspond to its deeds, that it acquired the habit of using unscrupulous revolutionary phrases (note the present attitude of Kautsky and Co. to the Basle Manifesto). Disarmament is a social idea, *i.e.*, an idea that springs from a certain social environment and which can affect a certain social environment, and is not merely a cranky notion of an individual. It has evidently sprung from the exceptionally "calm" conditions of life in individual small States which have long stood aside and hope thus to stay aside from the bloody world road of war. To be convinced of this it is sufficient, for instance, to ponder over the arguments advanced by the Norwegian advocates of disarmament. "We are a small country," they say. "We have a small army, we can do nothing against the Great Powers" (and therefore we are also powerless to resist being forcibly drawn into an imperialist *alliance* with one or the other group of Great Powers . . .). "We wish to be left in peace in our remote corner and continue to conduct our parochial politics, to demand disarmament, compulsory courts of arbitration, permanent neutrality" ("permanent" after the Belgian fashion, no doubt), etc.

A petty striving of petty States to stand aside, a petty-bourgeois desire to keep as far as possible from the great battles of world history, to take advantage of their relatively monopolistic position in order to remain in fossilized passivity—this is the *objective* social environment which secures for the disarmament idea a certain degree of success and a certain degree of popularity in some of the small States. It goes without saying that this striving is reactionary and is entirely based on illusions, for imperialism, in one way or another, draws the small States into the vortex of world economy and world politics.

In Switzerland, for example, the imperialist environment objectively gives rise to *two* lines in the labor movement. The opportunists, in alliance with the bourgeoisie, are trying to convert Switzerland into a Republican-Democratic monopolistic federation for obtaining profits from imperialist bourgeois tourists and to make this "quiet" monopolistic position as profitable and quiet as possible.

The genuine Social-Democrats of Switzerland strive to take advantage of the comparative freedom of Switzerland and its "international" situation (proximity to the most highly cultural countries), the fact that Switzerland, thank God, has not "its own" independent language, but three world languages, to widen, consolidate and strengthen the revolutionary alliance of the revolutionary elements of the proletariat of the whole of Europe. Switzerland, thank God, has not "its own" language, but three world languages,

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precisely those that are spoken by the neighboring belligerent countries.

If the twenty thousand members of the Swiss Party were to pay a weekly levy of two centimes as a sort of "extra war tax", we would have about twenty thousand francs per annum, a sum more than sufficient to enable us to publish periodically in three languages and to distribute among the workers and soldiers of the belligerent countries—in spite of the ban of general staffs—all the material containing the truth about the incipient revolt of the workers, about their fraternizing in the trenches, about their hopes to use their arms in a revolutionary manner against the imperialist bourgeoisie of "their own" countries, etc.

All this is not new. This is exactly what is being done by the best papers, like *La Sentinelle*, *Volksrecht*, the *Berner Tagwacht*, but unfortunately it is not being done in sufficient volume. Only by such activity can the splendid decision of the Aarau Congress become something more than merely a splendid decision.

The question that interests us at present can be presented in this way: is the demand for disarmament a fitting one for the revolutionary section of the Swiss Social-Democrats? Obviously not. Objectively "disarmament" is an extremely national, a specifically national program of small States; it is certainly not an international program of international revolutionary Social-Democracy.

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The National Congress for Unemployment and Social Insurance — And After

By I. AMTER

A CONGRESS based upon one of the most important issues facing the working class will be held in Washington, D. C., on January 5, 6 and 7. This is the National Congress for Unemployment and Social Insurance—a broad united front Congress initiated by the National Unemployment Council and organized by a broad National Arrangements Committee, which includes people of all trades, professions, and political affiliations.

This Congress has been made possible and necessary by the growing destitution in the country. With the unemployment figure remaining at fully 16,000,000, and with a prospect of a further rise during the coming months, it is obvious that the issue of social insurance, which has been raised so militantly by the Communist Party, the N.U.C. and the militant organizations, will cause wide reverberations.

This has been reflected also in government circles. As a result of the campaign for the Workers Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill, which has drawn to its support four to five million people, in the form of endorsements by locals of the A. F. of L., Railroad Brotherhoods, independent and T.U.U.L. unions, prominent national fraternal orders, professional, farm, veteran, Negro and youth organizations as well as 68 municipal councils and county commissions, etc., Roosevelt was compelled to make a demagogic gesture just before the closing of the 73rd U. S. Congress. In his message to Congress, he declared:

"*The security of the home, the security of livelihood and the security of social insurance are, it seems to me, a minimum promise that we can offer to the American people.*"

To effect this, Roosevelt appointed a so-called "National Committee on Economic Security", which includes leading lights of his cabinet.

On June 28, Roosevelt evidently felt that his "promise" was already bearing fruit. In a radio broadcast he cynically asked the

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following questions, presumably of the whole population of the country:

"Are you better off than you were last year? Are your debts less burdensome? Is your bank account more secure? Are your working conditions better? Is your faith in your own individual future more firmly grounded?"

These questions would have been, and in their own minds were, answered in the negative, not only by the millions of unemployed, but also by the millions of part-time workers, professionals, small farmers, businessmen, etc. (The radio is quite a convenient medium through which to ask such questions!)

This constituted the inauguration of the election campaign, giving the cast to the slogans and the platform. The Democratic Party set the pace by a continuation of "promises", as of 1932. The Republican Party, which up to this year had opposed all ideas of unemployment or social insurance, endorsed unemployment insurance. The other parties—the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota had endorsed the Workers Bill; the Socialist Party had no bill of its own, but put unemployment insurance into its platform. Only the Communist Party carried on a real campaign for the Workers' Bill, making it the center of its election campaign.

Roosevelt's election promises brought forth an avalanche of opposition from the big capitalists. They pretended not to know whether Roosevelt inclined towards the "Left" or towards the "Right". The demagogy of the election campaign—Upton Sinclair in California; Olsen, now no longer a "progressive", but a "radical", advocating a "change of the system" in Minnesota; Zimmerman in Oregon; and LaFollette in Wisconsin—worried the bankers and big manufacturers of the country. On October 24, therefore—before the elections—at the convention of the American Bankers' Association, Roosevelt was compelled to state his position explicitly. He stood for the retention of the capitalist system; he believed in profit; he would do nothing to prevent "recovery"; he could be counted on to increase earnings and dividends.

The demagogic declarations to the masses, however, continued—and *continues*—as part of the whole policy of strengthening, as far as possible, finance capital in the deepening crisis.

On November 14—after the elections—and after he had received a so-called "mandate from the people", Roosevelt declared his position more openly. At the conference called by the "National Committee on Economic Security" in Washington, Roosevelt, following his theme of "first things first", stated that he would sponsor a system only of "unemployment insurance". Health insurance, old age pensions, etc., were postponed to a future date. The conference

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had been called to act as a sounding board for the proposals of the "National Committee" on the "security" problems, and their solution, promised to the last session of the U. S. Congress by Roosevelt. Bankers, businessmen, labor leaders, social workers attended the conference, awaiting the word of the president. The "word" caused consternation. How could the president forget his promises to the masses? How could he ignore the "mandate" given him in the elections?

The apologists immediately went into action. Miss Perkins "interpreted" his speech as including *all* forms of social insurance in the program. It was on the assurance that this was embodied in Roosevelt's program that her speeches were fired with enthusiasm, as were the speeches of her co-workers in the National Committee and of others invited to address the conference—speeches which were issued to the conferees at the conference.

Thus it was clear that, with the elections settled, the bankers' demands, which were backed up by the National Manufacturers' Association and other groups of big capital, were being openly met by Roosevelt. That the demands of the bankers were insistent was evident further in the assertions of General Smedley Butler, who had been called upon to head a fascist organization, the strings of which lead to the doorsteps of J. P. Morgan. Still more evident are the hysterical attacks made by the fascist Hearst press upon the militant labor movement, and the rapid growth of open fascist organizations, such as the American Liberty League, American Union for Social Justice (Father Coughlin), etc.

It is not easy, however, for Roosevelt to fulfill the demands of the bankers, in view of the developing crisis. During and since the elections, the capitalists have been trying to create an "atmosphere" of "growing confidence". They point to increasing profits. On the anniversary of the New Deal, both Senator Wagner and Donald Richberg heralded a "new era" in the tremendously increased earnings of the big corporations. This has continued. (On Dec. 10 the U. S. Treasury Department reported that 26 more people had made incomes of over $1,000,000 between Mar. 1933 and Jan. 1934, while incomes below $5,000 declined.)

Montgomery, Ward & Co., increased its earnings in nine months from $570,000 in 1933, to $7,182,000 in 1934—an increase of 1,260 *per cent;* Standard Oil from $128,938,000 in 1933 to $168,000,000 in 1934—an increase of 30 per cent. Six hundred and seventy-five companies increased their dividends in one month from $148,083,000 in October, of this year, to $347,246,000 in November—*nearly* 235 *per cent.* Many extra dividends were paid during that month. Finally, while the destitution of the masses is growing,

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interest and dividends of corporations for the years 1933 and 1934 are estimated by the Journal of Commerce of New York at $6,385,000,000 and $6,340,000,000 respectively. Thus finance capital has no reason to deplore the "New Deal" or to fear President Roosevelt. And when it is reported by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation that 800,000 *out of the* 50,000,000 *depositors in the United States control two-thirds of the* $36,465,000,000 *in deposits*, then again it is clear that the bankers can agree with Roosevelt's policy—not the policy *professed to the masses*, but the policy *enacted for* the ruling class.

In this situation, the U. S. Chamber of Commerce states that there is "evidence of improving business sentiment and a basis for it" (N. Y. *Times*, Nov. 24). While putting more pressure upon Roosevelt, particularly with regard to "tapering off costs of production" (read: *wages*), the American Bankers Association and the U. S. Chamber of Commerce express confidence in "recovery".

With this so-called "recovery" taking place, the masses have nothing in common. On the contrary, in the month of November unemployment increased by 550,000, according to the report of the American Federation of Labor. Green states that there are 11,000,000 unemployed in the country. But Green's figure does not take into account various factors. There are among the unemployed in the United States, 250,000 teachers, hundreds of thousands of architects (95 per cent), engineers and technicians (85 per cent), tens of thousands of doctors, artists, writers, journalists, etc. The adoption of the Agricultural Adjustment Act with its "plow-under" program, resulted in the elimination of 300,000 cotton growers (sharecroppers and tenant farmers) in Texas alone. The result is 1,500,000 people on relief from that source alone.

The United States Department of Education has announced that during the five years of the crisis, about 7,000,000 boys and girls have graduated from the high schools and colleges. No more than one-third of these boys and girls have obtained work during this period, and then only at part-time and miserable wages (Newton D. Baker). This means that about 5,000,000 youth are totally unemployed.

Thus the figure of 16,000,000 unemployed is more nearly correct. The prospect for the coming months is not better. On the contrary, the steel industry, despite all the ballyhoo, is only operating at 29½ per cent of capacity (Dec. 10). The railroad, building construction, auto industries, etc., which means the basic industries, are purchasing no steel. But even increased production does not necessarily denote increased employment. Thus, the *Blue Eagle News*, official organ of the National Recovery Administration, re-

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ports (Nov. 26, 1934) that from May to September, 1934, employment in the chemical industry declined only slightly, the payroll dropped somewhat more, but *production rose 27 per cent.* Speed-up and stretch-out are increasing in every industry. The employers, protesting against the minimum scales in the codes, using every method to evade them, and fearing no prosecution at the hands of the government, are introducing labor-saving machinery, thus economizing on wages.

Roosevelt has made it perfectly clear that the responsibility for relief for the millions of unemployed can no longer rest on the federal government, but must be shifted to the states and municipalities. The "community fund" campaigns, with the open blessing of Roosevelt, are in full progress, representing a direct tax on the wages of workers in shops, mines, offices. Pleading poverty and demanding economy, the state and city legislative bodies are imposing general sales taxes. They refuse to tax the rich; they refuse to declare a moratorium on the debt service of tens of millions of dollars to the bankers. No, the legislative bodies are for more "democratic" methods in taxation. Sales, wages, transit taxes are being levied, or stand immediately ahead of us.

While unemployment is increasing, the relief authorities are throwing tens of thousands off the relief rolls. Thus, in Alabama, the number on the relief rolls was cut from 103,000 to 54,000. In the cities, tens of thousands are being removed—but at the same time the number of *new* applicants is increasing, so that the total on the rolls is growing. Donald Richberg, reporting to Roosevelt, stated that 4,200,000 are on the relief rolls, but by next February the number will be 5,000,000. There are tens of thousands of new applicants who have never applied for relief, being "too proud", but who now are driven by desperation to do so.

About 100,000 single and young workers are in the transient camps, working for their food, shelter and—90 cents a week! There are more than 200 camps, and they are being increased. The government has extended the C.C.C. camps, and is recruiting 370,000 for service in the camps (an increase of 70,000 in these military camps!). This is the only part of the so-called "relief" program of the government that Roosevelt wishes continued, and the only part approved by the American Bankers' Association and the National Manufacturers' Association! This is part of the war program of the Wall Street government—a program that it is being put through under the guise of "public works"!

The government continues its own so-called "public works". The number of men employed is declining, but the purpose of these "public works" and the pay granted the men are illuminating. Thus,

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the total number of men working on federal construction projects on Sept. 15 (latest report) was 390,000. The average pay amounted to $56.14 *a month*, this including highly skilled mechanics. On F.E.R.A. projects there were 549,000 men (a decline of 75,000) receiving an average wage of $9.62 *a week*. On this the worker must live and pay for his food, rent, light, clothing, etc. The total payroll for 14 months amounted to $261,000,000, while the government expended $505,000,000 for "materials". What are these "materials"? They include $8,500,000 for "aircraft and aircraft parts", $51,000,000 for "foundry and machine shop products", $34,000,000 for "freight cars", etc. (This shows the method of preparing for *war* under the mask of "public works".)

While the government ballyhoos about "recovery" in spite of the definite prospect of a sharp decline during the coming months, and while Richberg declares that there has been an increase in the payroll of 8.5 per cent, we have but to note the government figures on individual earnings. Thus, the 3,439,000 workers in 24,206 manufacturing establishments earned, on the average, $18.55 per week (report as of September, 1934—latest report), compared with $18.40 a year ago. In some industries, it is far lower, as for instance, in the cotton goods industry, where the average pay was only $12.55 a week. But even the pretended gain is totally wiped out by the increase in the cost of living, a fact attested to by the increased earnings of the big corporations. According to the Department of Agriculture, the cost of farm products has gone up about 30 per cent. This will rise still more, owing to the drought, which the food speculators are taking advantage of, so that from Secretary of Agriculture Wallace we get the warning of rising prices during the winter.

This is to be noted further in the purchase of food stuffs by the workers. Thus, retail trade in 1933 declined 47 *per cent* compared with 1929. The Butler Company, one of the oldest chain food stores in the United States is closing up a large proportion of its stores because of the drop in sales. This is to be noted also in the purchase of milk. In New York State, there was a reduction of 12,000,000 quarts in ten weeks, and in New York City, of 5,000,000 quarts during the month of October alone, when a "Buy More Milk" month was proclaimed by the governor. The low pay of the workers and the cuts in relief make it impossible for the workers to buy foodstuffs, with the result that, above all, the children are slowly starving—25 per cent are undernourished (U. S. Children's Bureau), 75 per cent have bad teeth, 80 per cent suffer from defective eyesight.

While the working class has to meet these attacks on its living

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standards, the Brookings Institute announces that, if the present capacity of industry were used to the maximum, there would be an income of *nearly* $5,000 *per family* (provided it were properly distributed—something which cannot happen under the capitalist system). At the same time, Dr. Ezekiel of the U. S. Department of Agriculture announces that $2,500 is needed for a "moderately full life" in the United States. But 71 *per cent* of all families cannot even approach this sum, as is evident from the average earnings given above.

In this situation of growing misery, and in the face of the so-called "mandate of approval" of the Roosevelt "New Deal" governmental program, which in reality only constituted a rejection of the program of "rugged individualism" of Hoover and the Republican Party, the government again comes forward with "promises". Although at different times, particularly during the election campaign, the people were promised federal expenditures reaching up to the fabulous sum of 25 to 50 billion dollars, the sum has been sobered down to four billions.

The "program" of the government consists of the following items: (1) *Slum clearance*, (2) *Public works*, (3) *Subsistence homesteads*, (4) *Transient camps*, (5) *Extension of the C.C.C. camps*, (6) *Unemployment Insurance*. Let us examine all these items.

Slums exist in all American cities. They are the breeding ground of disease, degeneracy, and crime. In the United States, which boasts of having the "highest culture", millions of homes have no modern sanitary appliances. Tens of thousands of American "homes" have rooms without light or air. The National Unemployment Council, after making a study, discovered that 67 *billion dollars' worth of home building, construction of hospitals, schools, playgrounds*, is needed to give decent housing to American workers. In undertaking the modest task of slum clearance, however, the government immediately announced that the project could be considered only on the condition that the building trades workers would cooperate—in the matter of *wages*. The government promised "more work" and a "higher all-year wage" provided scales would be reduced. William Green promised cooperation. This means an offensive against the wages of the millions of building trades workers. But even then, the price per room will be beyond the reach of the workers, so that, as experience has already shown, they will not benefit by the slum clearance program, but will be compelled to move into the less favorable apartments.

Public works will continue, as in the past, to consist of the building of war vessels, airplanes, etc. The threat of the U. S. government to build "two vessels to every one" that Japan plans, is the open position of the government. An airfleet of 2,400 planes is

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now under construction; more battleships and other armaments are part of the program. This is "public works"!

"*In my opinion, the subsistence homesteads are the most important part of the whole New Deal program.*" So stated H. M. Wilson, head of that division of the U. S. government, at a recent conference. Let us look into this question. The government proposes to transport 1,000,000 families to these homesteads. They will be parceled out on small tracts of land. The government will buy up large areas and divide them into parcels of from one to four acres, on each of which the government will erect homes. The patches of land and the homes will cost from $2,000 to $3,500 each. The future occupant will be compelled to make a down payment, for the government makes it very clear that it is not making a gift.

The homesteader will raise fruit and vegetables for his own consumption, not for sale. He must pay about $200 a year in installments, over a period of 20 to 25 years. To earn the necessary money for this purpose, and also to furnish his family with other food, with clothing, electricity, gas, etc., he will work in a factory already existing or in one to be erected near the site. He will receive *relief wages*. Harry L. Hopkins, federal relief director, has abolished all standard rates on relief projects, declaring that henceforth rates shall be those prevailing. This means in some localities 15 to 20 cents an hour; for the Negroes in the South it means 5, 6 or 7 *cents an hour*. This program is especially favored by Henry Ford, and Mr. Harriman, president of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce.

Thus a new group of farmers will be created, displacing and driving off the farms tens of thousands more farmers. A new group of "employed" will be created, driving into unemployment hundreds of thousands more workers now employed. But the worst feature of this "brain trust" idiocy is that these million homesteaders will be used in the wage offensive against the workers in the shops, in an effort to slash wages all around. The real aim of these homesteads is to *drive the unemployed out of the cities, to keep them from organizing and conducting a fight for adequate relief and unemployment insurance; to tie them to their homesteads and to relieve the government of the responsibility of providing for them.*

The transient and C.C.C. camps will be extended, as already noted.

The "promise" of unemployment insurance remains a promise. Although Roosevelt pledged immediate legislation, the joint committee of the American Bankers' Association and of the National Manufacturers' Association demand further study before any legislation is attempted. At the "National Congress of American Industry", held in New York City on December 5, this most power-

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ful body, representing 130,000 manufacturers of the United States, was very emphatic in its demands. Richberg and Secretary Roper spoke at the congress, and assured the manufacturers that the government wants their cooperation. This cooperation will be given—on the terms laid down by the bankers and manufacturers. And Roosevelt will cooperate, no matter how much he will pretend to be fighting the bankers and industrialists.

On December 11, William Green announced his own unemployment "insurance" plan. According to this plan, all workers *now employed*, with the exception of domestic and agricultural workers, professionals and government employees, would be entitled to compensation amounting to at least 50 per cent of their average pay, but *not less* than $15 a week, for a period of 26 weeks in a year. Workers would not be compelled to accept strike-breaking work or labor under conditions lower than their normal work. Contributions to the unemployment "insurance" fund would be made exclusively by the employers, at the rate of 6 per cent of the payroll. The committee in charge of the fund would be composed equally of representatives of labor and capital.

This proposal is purely demagogic, and has as its intent to keep the workers from support of the National Congress and of the Workers' Bill. The demagogy consists of Green's proposal that *the unemployed should receive no less than* $15 *a week*, while he consented without a struggle to minimum wages under the codes of $11, $12 or $13 a week for 35 to 40 hours of work. Secondly, the proposal of a tax of 5 per cent of the payroll means to increase the price of the product, which the worker has to pay as a consumer.

The most shameful plank in the proposal is to the effect that

> *"Workers who quit work without good cause or who are discharged for misconduct shall not thereby forfeit benefits beyond a reasonable period."*

Misconduct in a shop has a definite meaning today. Workers who talk organization in the shop, or actually carry it out, are discharged. The auto, steel, textile, rubber workers already have a history of blacklisting, which would exclude them from benefit under this insurance plan. Further, "quitting without good cause" would have to be decided by the unemployment insurance commission, which is weighted against the worker. In other words, Green's bill would have a *strike-breaking* effect.

Four days later, the so-called Advisory Council of the National Committee on Economic Security announced its plan. Among the members of this Council are Green, Gerard Swope of General Electric, Walter Teagle of Standard Oil, Morris E. Leeds of Leeds

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and Northrup, S. Lewisohn of the Miami Copper Co., Marion B. Folsem of the Eastman Kodak Co., and a group of liberals, who supported the Council proposal. In opposition were such people as Paul Sharrenberg, of the California State Federation of Labor; George Berry, president of the International Printing Pressmen's Union; J. G. Winant, chairman of the National Textile Board and governor of New Hampshire, where a most reactionary bill is being proposed; Louis J. Taber, master of the National Grange; G. M. Harrison, president of the Railway and Steamship Clerks.

The Advisory Council bill, which, it is stated, "carries out in detail the wishes of Roosevelt", has been announced only sketchily. It provides for a 3 per cent tax on payrolls, which the worker will shoulder in that "his share of the tax will be attached to the things he buys". The amount of benefit will be "50 per cent of the worker's average weekly wage, with a *maximum* compensation of $15 a week" (quite a distinction from Green's bill). However, the worker (the unemployed are all excluded) will only receive "on a ratio of *one week's benefit for every four weeks of previous employment*". Thus, if he has worked 20 weeks, he will be entitled to only 5 weeks of compensation. "*At the end of such period, the insurance would be exhausted and the payments would stop.*" And even then, the worker would get no compensation during a waiting period of two to four weeks (the exact time is not yet announced).

The worker is not assured the stipulated amount of compensation under all conditions. "To finance these payments, it is provided that if business, measured by the Federal Reserve Board's index, does not average 90 per cent of normal in 1935, the tax rate in 1936 shall be only 1 per cent." The amount of unemployment compensation depends on the tax paid by the employer. If the tax rate is reduced, owing to business not "averaging 90 per cent of normal", then the amount of unemployment compensation will be cut correspondingly. And finally, the bill cannot go into effect until *October*, 1936.

This bill is to be administered by a commission composed of the Secretary of Labor, Secretary of Commerce, and five persons appointed by Roosevelt.

Green apparently has accepted this proposal in place of his own. This bill, which also supplants the Wagner-Lewis bill, is another attempt of the government supported by reactionary and liberal forces to foist a fake bill upon the workers. Against this bill as well, the national conference of bankers and manufacturers in Sulphur Springs on December 19 has taken up the fight.

In this situation, the forthcoming National Congress for Unemployment and Social Insurance is of the greatest significance. As

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a united front of broad dimensions, it represents the effort of all who are sincerely interested in the enactment of a genuine unemployment and social insurance bill, to get together. It is becoming clear to larger sections of industrial, white collar, and professional workers that the makeshifts of the government are being attempted and carried through at the expense of the masses. There is only the widest insecurity for the toilers. With the deepening and prolongation of the crisis, the situation becomes intolerable, and the movement to force the government to pass a genuine unemployment and social insurance bill is growing correspondingly.

It cannot be stated that all organizations will have been reached in the preparations for the Congress. On the contrary, the Party and the Left-wing organizations continue to underestimate the possibilities in this campaign. Today there is *no issue of broader appeal* than the issue of unemployment insurance. Whereas one or two years ago, the government could demagogically refer to unemployment insurance, and the organizations of bankers and industrialists could ignore it, the introduction of the Workers' Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill on February 2, 1934, followed quite deliberately by the introduction of the Roosevelt-sponsored Wagner-Lewis Bill only three days later, has brought the issue before the masses as never before. The friends and foes of genuine insurance are taking a stand.

The tremendous support for the Workers' Bill *can* and *must* be *amplified*. This can be done, as is manifest where any effort has been made to reach the working class organizations. The reformist leaders of some organizations continue their attack on the Workers' Bill. The Socialist Party has adopted the general slogan of unemployment insurance, but advocates insurance on a state scale. Thus, it supports Roosevelt's program, which has the aim of preventing the enactment of a genuine unemployment insurance bill. In New York State, the S.P. leaders openly sponsor bills which deprive the unemployed of any unemployment compensation.

The Socialist and the Muste-controlled unemployed organizations have practically all endorsed the Workers' Bill, but the Muste and Socialist leaders have refused to participate in the preparations for the National Congress. On November 24, they organized so-called "nation-wide" demonstrations for the Workers' Bill and other demands, but refused to accept the participation of the National Unemployment Council. The N.U.C. participated on a local scale, again proving its desire for unity. The Socialist and Musteite leaders continue to pursue their policy of splitting the working class also on this most vital, burning issue of unemployment and social insurance.

The National Congress is not the end-all of the work to be done.

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On the contrary, the Congress will improve and amplify the Workers' Bill and will map out a campaign to win the support of ever wider masses of workers and their organizations. The proposal of the government is for a "Federal-State" bill. The state legislatures will meet this January in 43 states. They will have before them various bills. Thus, it becomes of increasing importance that forces be directed not only against the federal but also the state governments. The program of rallying the workers and their organizations to struggle against these plans and for the Workers' Bill will be one of the most important tasks of the National Congress. The establishment of a National Continuations Committee to carry on the work, State Continuations Committees, County and Local Committees for Unemployment and Social Insurance (with the nucleus composed of the local sponsoring committees set up in preparation for the National Congress)—these will be some of the tasks before the National Congress. Pressure through delegations, demonstrations, discussions, endorsements, resolutions, hunger marches, strikes, etc., must be developed. This winter will test our ability to build a united front on the broadest, most burning issue before the American masses.

The outlook for the winter is a serious one; the prospect of "recovery" is fantastic and absurd. Everything points to the deepening of the crisis which let up somewhat last year, with another imperialist slaughter as the only way out for the capitalists. This, the capitalists comprehend very well, at the same time that they shout "recovery" through the radio, press, movies, etc. "Recovery before reform," says Roosevelt. Continued profits, mounting profits—no help for the starving masses beyond what is needed to keep them quiet, disorganized, subdued.

Against this program, as part of our whole revolutionary program, is the need of rallying ever broader masses for the Workers' Bill, for increased wages, for the right to strike, picket, and demonstrate, against fascism and war. Every force must be thrown into the fight, in the course of which we must build the mass organizations, and above all the Party and Y.C.L. We must not leave one single organization untouched. The masses, despite their lingering illusions as regards Roosevelt's promises, are ready to fight. Our job is, on the basis of the united front, to present them with a program that will involve them and lead them into militant battle. The National Congress is a decisive step in this direction.

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DISCUSSION OF QUESTIONS FOR THE SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL.

(In preparation for the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, we will publish discussion articles and materials connected with questions on the agenda of the Congress.—Editorial Board.)

Sharpen the Fight for the Central Slogan of the World Communist Party — Soviet Power!

By MAX YOUNG

THE struggles of the American working class, during the past one and a half years of the Roosevelt administration, have attained a higher level than ever before. This is obvious both with regard to the character of these struggles and the vast numbers of workers involved.

The Communist Party has participated in all of the major strike struggles of this period. Especially outstanding was its role in the leadership of the General Strike in San Francisco. Today, everyone in the United States, including the worst enemies of the working class, admits that our Party is becoming a real leader in the struggles of the American working class. Our Party is making progress on the road to Bolshevization.

In this article, we shall deal with only one question: How is the Party fulfilling its main task; that is to say, how is the Party raising before the toiling masses the slogan of the revolutionary way out of the crisis, the slogan of the struggle for Soviet Power? Concretely, how is the Party preparing the proletariat for the overthrow of capitalism—for the seizure of the factories, for the confiscation of the banks, the mines, transport, houses, and the stocks of goods of the capitalists? How is the Party preparing for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a transitional State,

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which, by exercising the widest democracy for the toilers but the sternest dictatorship against the exploiters, will lead all the oppressed and exploited to a classless society?

The most important teaching of Marxism-Leninism is that the Party must, while organizing and leading the struggles of the working class in defense of its immediate interests, also lead it toward the crushing of bourgeois rule and for the establishment of Soviet Power. This lies at the very foundation of the Communist Parties of the world; it is the distinguishing mark of the world Party of Communism, the Communist International. In April, 1919, Lenin pointed this out:

> "The world historic importance of the Third, Communist, International consists in the fact that it has begun to bring to life Marx's greatest slogan, the slogan which sums up the century-old development of Socialism and of the labor movement, the slogan which is expressed in the conception: the dictatorship of the proletariat. These prophecies of genius, these theories of genius, are becoming a reality. These Latin words have now been translated into all the national languages of modern Europe—more than that—into all the languages of the world. A new epoch and a new world history has begun."

Since 1919, the Soviet Union has made tremendous progress. Today it is successfully building a classless society; it is making history for the international proletariat as well as for the oppressed peoples of the world. It has translated these "Latin words"—dictatorship of the proletariat—not only into all the languages of the world but into life itself. These words have acquired a magnetic attraction for the toiling and exploited masses in the farthermost corners of the globe.

The chief slogan of the Communist International today is: Soviet Power.

While no one in our Party disagrees with this slogan, nevertheless, we find, when we examine the everyday work of our Party, that many of our comrades do not apply this slogan in practice.

Let us see how, in our day-to-day activities, we prepare the working class and its allies for the decisive battles for power and the Party for its role as vanguard of the working class. For without discovering and correcting our mistakes in this work, we shall never be able to destroy the illusions of bourgeois democracy, of class collaboration, of the peaceful achievement of Socialism through parliamentary action. Without doing this we shall never be able to lead the working masses successfully against capitalism.

In analyzing the work of our Party in the recent tremendous actions at Toledo, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, San Francisco, the gen-

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eral textile strike, the struggles of the unemployed, and the struggles for Negro rights, we do not find a consistent linking up of the economic struggles carried on by the workers against their unbearable living conditions, with their political struggles directed against the capitalist State which seeks to perpetuate those conditions. Usually only the fight for the immediate demands and rights of the working class is carried on. In some place, the nature of the State machinery is exposed, if at all, in a slipshod, mechanical way; the "revolutionary way out"—the forcible overthrow of capitalism becomes a meaningless dogma instead of a conscious, concrete plan of action for the solution of the problems facing the working class today. This method of work disregards the fundamental basis for Bolshevik work. Lenin, in creating and building the Russian Bolshevik Party as an integral part of the international Bolshevist movement, fought vigorously against any separation of the economic struggles of the working class from its political and theoretical struggles.

Of course, it is true that at the present time every economic struggle tends more and more to manifest itself as a political struggle, in the sense that it brings the working class into conflict immediately with the N.R.A. code machinery, with the A. F. of L. officialdom, with the police, and with the entire State apparatus. But we should always bear in mind that the full implication of these conflicts must be continuously and clearly pointed out to the workers, since these economic struggles will never spontaneously and of themselves bring about a conscious political struggle of the entire working class for the overthrow of the capitalist State. Only through our persistent activity as a Party with a Marxist-Leninist understanding can this high point of political struggle be achieved.

Those who work on the assumption that the bourgeoisie, by creating the N.R.A., by establishing arbitration boards, by calling out the armed forces of the State against strikers, by increasing in a hundred and one ways the direct intervention of the capitalist State in the struggles of the workers, is itself "giving the economic struggle a political character" and thereby "lessening the burden" of revolutionary education of the masses, are profoundly mistaken. They are slaves to spontaneity who do not understand the difference between trade union politics and Communist politics. Lenin stated in this connection:

> "Very often the economic struggle *spontaneously* assumes a political character, that is to say without the injection of the 'revolutionary bacilli of the intelligentsia', without the intervention of the class-conscious Social-Democrats. For example, the economic struggle of the British workers assumed a political character without the

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> intervention of the Socialists. The tasks of the Social-Democrats, however, are not exhausted by political agitation on the economic field; their task is to convert trade union politics into the Social-Democratic political struggle, to utilize the flashes of political consciousness which gleam in the minds of the workers during their economic struggles for the purpose of raising them to the level of Social-Democratic political consciousness." (*What Is to Be Done?* p. 71.)

The masses will never learn the lesson of Soviet Power *merely* from head-on collision with the forces of the capitalist State in the course of their economic struggles. Not all the mass delegations in the world to all the N.R.A. Boards (which to some comrades is the height of politicalization of strikers) will of themselves raise the political consciousness of the masses from the level of trade union politics to Communist politics. For this, the conscious and planned revolutionary education of the masses by the revolutionary Party of the proletariat is absolutely necessary.

In the United States, our agitation on the economic field against speed-up, for a shorter work-day, for higher wages, for a lower cost of living, is carried to a relatively higher degree than is our agitation on the political field. In view of the intensity of the economic struggles of the masses this is not at all surprising; but, neither, from a Communist point of view, is it entirely correct. In most cases, it flows from a reliance on spontaneity; from an unconscious tendency to regard the economic struggle as "the most widely applicable method of drawing the masses into the political struggle". It is this tendency which permits us to pass by in comparative silence such infamous outrages as the Insull swindle, scandalous graft in the city administrations, the munitions inquiry, etc.—events which, if properly utilized, can act as a springboard for raising the political consciousness and activity of the masses sometimes even higher than is possible in the course of a strike.

We do not sufficiently expose the role of the city, state and federal governments, the press, the schools, and the fallacies of the bourgeois theories of planned economy under capitalism, of "recovery first before social legislation", of nationalism, patriotism and chauvinism. And yet, without an all-sided exposure which does not limit itself to the economic field alone, it will be impossible to raise the political consciousness of the masses, to infuse the workers with the revolutionary teachings of Marxism-Leninism, to win them for the struggle for Soviet Power. Without this, all our political work will remain stunted; our politics will not rise higher than the level of trade union politics; we will never attain our revolutionary objectives.

But in order to raise the level of our political agitation, it is

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not sufficient merely to expose these bourgeois theories and the nature of the capitalist State. Our agitation must be positive; we must popularize widely *our way* out—the idea of a revolutionary workers' and farmers' government in the interests of the toiling masses and against the exploiting class.

To show that the work of our Party in popularizing the revolutionary way out is at a low level, it is only necessary to examine our work in the most outstanding action of the working class to date, the General Strike in San Francisco. At the height of the strike, the frightened capitalist press howled that "foreign agitators and Communists planned to overthrow the American government and establish Communism".

To which our comrades replied, "You gentlemen are spreading the 'Red scare'; you are trying to frighten the workers away from our leadership; but we only insist that you grant the demands of the strikers." This answer was nothing short of apologetic, even though it was followed by an explanation of the conditions which are required for a revolutionary situation.

It is absolutely true that the Communist Party had no intention, and could have had none, of transforming the San Francisco strike into a revolution, for we, who are Marxist-Leninists, do not estimate a situation by our desires and emotions but by a sober and calculating analysis of all the objective circumstances and conditions surrounding it.

But in every struggle, and particularly in a struggle which developed to the height of the San Francisco action, it is necessary to put forward a positive program, to popularize among all strata of the population what they would gain by a revolutionary solution of their problems, under a dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus only will the working class strengthen its conscious struggles against the State machinery.

However, our comrades did not do this. In the beginning, they were even afraid to criticize the A. F. of L. bureaucracy sharply; they were afraid to expose every move of the traitor, Ryan, on the excuse that many of the workers would be antagonized. Lenin and Stalin warned us repeatedly not to cater to the misconceptions of certain backward strata of workers under penalty of lagging behind the working class rather than leading it.

We must attack this problem with special sharpness now that we are in the process of becoming a real mass Party. We are rapidly breaking away from the sectarian tendencies which existed for a long period of time in our Party. Recently we have made some important inroads into the A. F. of L. unions, and are beginning, though still slowly, to carry on work in the company unions. Our full Communist position, our full Communist explanation, on

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all-important questions, must be brought forward boldly in our day-to-day work. Otherwise, we shall find ourselves building a house of cards.

The E.C.C.I., in the Theses adopted at its Thirteenth Plenum, emphasized:

> "It is necessary with all insistence to raise the question of *power* in the mass work of the Parties. The chief slogan of the Communist International is: *Soviet Power.*"

Further on it states:

> "The Plenum of the E.C.C.I. obliges all Sections of the Communist International to be on their guard at every turn of events, and to exert every effort without losing a moment for the revolutionary preparation of the proletariat for the impending decisive battles for power."

Comrade Kuusinen in his report to the Thirteenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. stressed that "to gloss over these questions [of power —M. Y.] in the present situation is opportunism, more dangerous than the 'Leftist' inability to link up the question of power with the every-day partial demands of the toiling masses".

The slogan of Soviet Power is put forward as the chief slogan for all Parties of the Communist International. In some countries it is a slogan for immediate action, in others a slogan for propaganda use. There is no doubt that in the United States this is at the moment a slogan for propaganda, and it is from this point of view that we deal with it in this article. But this does not mean that we are to use it in a formal and mechanical manner; for merely to raise the slogan in this way does not educate, organize or prepare the masses for Soviet Power. No matter how many times we may formally repeat the slogan "For a Soviet America" at the end of articles in our press, shop papers, and leaflets, and in our speeches, if we do not connect it to the subject with which we are dealing, we cannot say that we are carrying out our basic task.

It is necessary to take hold of the slogans *Soviet Power*, *Dictatorship of the Proletariat*—those "Latin words" which have been translated into all the languages of the world—and re-translate them into the language of the every-day life and struggle of the masses. In doing so, we must be careful not to vulgarize the meaning of these slogans and above all not to distort them as do certain quacks in the working class movement, who specialize in bandying about Latin prescriptions in a translation which is acceptable to the bourgeoisie rather than understandable by the masses.

The struggle to win the masses for the slogan *Dictatorship of*

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the Proletariat, for the slogan *Soviet Power*, takes place today under conditions which make necessary a simultaneous struggle against those who wish to "improve" on the Bolshevik formulation of the central revolutionary slogans of the proletariat.

Chief among these "revolutionary" quacks and political linguists is Professor Sidney Hook, that theoretical luminary of the newly spawned Trotzky-Muste offspring — the Workers Party. This gentleman translates "Soviet" into "Workers Council" and in the process of "Americanizing" these "Latin words" tosses the entire peasantry out of the window of the proletarian revolution. Contrast this poverty-stricken and politically incorrect "translation" with the Marxist-Leninist conception of Soviets as Councils of Workers *and Farmers*, and the real significance of this distortion (not translation!) becomes clear. In his zeal to arrive at a "translation" which will be acceptable to the bourgeoisie, Professor Hook is not content to toss the peasantry out of the window; he is even anxious to tone down the dictatorship of the proletariat, to make it acceptable to the bourgeoisie by replacing it with "workers' democracy".

To analyze in detail the intellectual and political poverty contained in this "Americanized", or rather embourgeoised, version of those "Latin words" would require a separate article. We merely wish to point out here, in bare outline, the deeper significance of this seemingly innocent replacement of the term "dictatorship of the proletariat" by "workers' democracy".

It is beyond dispute that the dictatorship of the proletariat, that Soviet Power, introduces democracy for the toilers, a democracy infinitely wider and richer than can ever be attained in the system of bourgeois democracy. It is also beyond dispute that we must utilize the powerful urge on the part of the oppressed masses for democratic rights to win them for the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But it is also a fact that the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat is not synonymous with the idea of workers' democracy; that the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat includes the idea of workers' democracy plus something else. It is this something else which brings the cold sweat of nightmares to the brow of the bourgeois philistine. This something else is nothing but the revolutionary act of smashing the bourgeois State machine, of the suppression of the political rights of the bourgeoisie, of the continuation of the class war under new conditions.

By emphasizing "the democratic rather than the dictatorial aspects of workers' rule", Hook reveals his own petty-bourgeois shrinking from the class war which is an integral part of the dicta-

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torship of the proletariat; he reveals the innate desire of the petty-bourgeois to "soften", to make more genteel, to emasculate the whole conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat. He reveals his inability to comprehend the remark of Engels that "so long as the proletariat still needs the State, it needs it not in the interests of freedom, but in order to suppress its opponents".

What has this "Americanized" version of the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat in common with Marxism-Leninism?

Comrade Stalin has given us the three basic aspects of the dictatorship of the proletariat:

> "1. The use of the power of the proletariat in order to crush the exploiters, in order to strengthen the ties with proletarians in other lands, and in order to favor the revolution everywhere.
>
> "2. The use of the power of the proletariat in order to detach the laboring and exploited masses once for all from the bourgeoisie, in order to strengthen the alliance of the proletariat with these masses, in order to enlist these masses in the work of socialist construction, and in order to ensure that in the State the proletariat shall function as leader of these masses.
>
> "3. The use of the power of the proletariat in order to organize socialism, abolish classes, and found a society without classes and without a State.
>
> "The dictatorship of the proletariat is a combination of all three. It is wrong to put any one of the three aspects to the front, or regard it as of unique significance. On the other hand, should any of the three characteristics be lacking, the result will be, in a capitalist environment, that the dictatorship of the proletariat will cease to be a dictatorship." (*Problems of Leninism*, p. 28.)

Hook, the counter-revolutionary Trotzkyite, needs this "Americanization" in order to draw this conclusion:

> "None the less, from the Marxian point of view, although there is more working class democracy present than anywhere else in the world, Soviet Russia cannot be regarded as a genuine workers' democracy. . . . I wish to maintain that there are certain 'horrendous excrescences' which interfere with the functioning of workers' democracy and which if unchecked will stifle all democracy within the Soviets. These can be directly traced to the undemocratic domination of the undemocratic Communist Party over the entire fabric of social life." (*Modern Monthly*, Nov., 1934.)

Here, then, in all its shamelessness is the significance of this replacement of the term *dictatorship of the proletariat*, by *workers' democracy*. Nobody can come to the workers today and maintain that the Soviet Union is not a genuine dictatorship of the proletariat. Even the bourgeoisie, especially the bourgeoisie, is compelled to recognize this fact. But is it not possible, the Trotzkyites fondly imagine, to come to the workers and say that the Soviet Union is

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not a genuine workers' democracy? By leaving out completely the qualitative test, the acid test of the dictatorship, *its class essence*, they hope to replace the workers' State with "workers' democracy" minus the dictatorship of the proletariat! They would like to "stretch out" democracy to liquidate the proletarian rule which alone guarantees the broadest possible democracy for the entire toiling population. This is the entire meaning of their contention that the Communist Party interferes with the growth of democracy in the Soviet Union and that therefore it is necessary to fight against the "domination of the Communist Party".

Downright counter-revolution! This is the content of Hook's "Americanization" of the words "dictatorship of the proletariat".

From this it can be seen that the bringing forward of our chief slogan, Soviet Power, must be accompanied by the widest and most popular, but scientifically correct, explanation of the meaning of Soviet Power, of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This must be accompanied by the sharpest attack against the counter-revolutionary Trotzkyites. This attack must be consistent, without the least wavering or weakening in our exposure of their role as the vanguard of the counter-revolution. Especially valuable in this struggle is Stalin's characterization of Trotzkyism in his letter of 1931 to the editorial board of the *Proletarskaya Revolutsia*:

> "As a matter of fact, Trotzkyism is the vanguard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, which is carrying on the struggle against the Communists, against the Soviet government, against the building of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.
>
> "Who gave the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie its intellectual weapon against Bolshevism, in the form of the thesis of the impossibility of building Socialism in our country, in the form of the thesis of the inevitability of the degeneration of the Bolsheviks, etc.? That weapon was given it by Trotzkyism. The fact that all anti-Soviet groups in the U.S.S.R., in their attempts to give grounds for their arguments for the inevitability of the struggle against the Soviet government, referred to the well-known thesis of Trotzkyism of the impossibility of building Socialism in our country, of the inevitable degeneration of the Soviet government, of the probability of the return of capitalism, cannot be regarded as an accident.
>
> "Who gave the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie in the U.S.S.R. its tactical weapon in the form of open attacks on the Soviet government? This weapon was given to it by the Trotzkyites, who tried to organize anti-Soviet demonstrations in Moscow and Leningrad on November 7, 1927. It is a fact that the anti-Soviet actions of the Trotzkyites raised the spirits of the bourgeoisie and let loose the work of counter-revolutionary sabotage of the bourgeois specialists.
>
> "Who gave the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie an organizational weapon in the form of attempts at organizing underground anti-Soviet organizations? This weapon was given to it by the

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> Trotzkyites who founded their own anti-Bolshevik illegal group. It is a fact that the underground anti-Soviet work of the Trotzkyites facilitated the organized formation of the anti-Soviet group within the U.S.S.R."

Both on an international scale and in the United States, as in the Minneapolis strike, in giving the line to the Hearst red-baiting press, in the campaign against the Soviet Union, and in numerous other acts, Trotzkyism has continuously proved itself to be the vanguard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie

* * *

How have we brought forward and popularized the central slogan of our Party?

Let us analyze a few of our shop papers to show how they treat the question of Soviet Power. Sixty-nine issues of thirty papers issued between the months of January to November, 1934, were examined. Of these thirty papers, seven were issued by steel units, four by auto, three by railroad, and nine in other large factories in basic industries, such as marine, electrical equipment, and meat packing.

In the majority of the papers, the slogan *Soviet Power* or *Towards Soviet America* is raised formally, without any attempt to convince the workers what such a government will mean to them or how to achieve it. The role of the Party as the vanguard of the working class in the struggle for Soviet Power is for the most part left unexplained. In this connection it would be well to discuss briefly how certain loose formulations can injure the effect of an otherwise good popularization of our main slogans. We have in mind an article that appeared in the *Stockyard Worker* issued during the Fifteenth Anniversary Celebration of the C.P.U.S.A. We refer to the following passage:

> "So, workers, join the Communist Party, the Party of your class, that has a splendid record of the achievements of establishing in the Soviet Union a workers' and farmers' government owned and controlled by the working class. No unemployment! No misery and starvation! The Soviet workers made the great sacrifice in 1917 by establishing their own government. They own the mines, the railroads, and the packing industries. They are the forerunners of the entire working class."

It is very hard to understand exactly to what "sacrifice" the comrades are referring. The October Revolution, it is obvious, liberated the peoples of the Soviet Union from the yoke of capitalism. By example it points the way towards the liberation of the working class and of the oppressed colonial peoples everywhere. Today we see two very contradictory systems, the one of growing

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socialism, the other, of decaying capitalism. In the capitalist world, taking the United States as an example, there is widespread and ever-increasing unemployment, the slaughter of workers striking for the bare necessities of life, marauding vigilante groups, and, as in fascist Germany, wholesale destruction of human life and culture. Under socialism, on the other hand, the comrades themselves point out, there is no unemployment, starvation or misery. Yet instead of emphasizing the fact that in 1917 in Russia, as in the rest of the capitalist countries today, the workers had "nothing to lose but their chains" (hardly a sacrifice, comrades), our comrades, unwittingly fall into the Social-Democratic conception that revolution is a "sacrifice".

In all the other examined issues celebrating the Fifteenth Anniversary Celebration of our Party, the revolutionary slogan *Soviet Power* was not explained at all.

There is in most instances a complete lack of political reaction to the numerous significant and outstanding political events which occurred in the period during which the papers were written. In dealing with the question of the struggle against imperialist war, the papers do not even mention, much less explain, Lenin's position on imperialist war, the turning of imperialist war into civil war, and of making our struggle against imperialist war an integral part of the struggle for Soviet Power.

Out of 15 papers issued in August and September, only six popularized the calling of the Second U. S. Congress against War and Fascism. Only one reported the following month on what had happened at the Congress. Two papers reacted to the International Women's Congress against War and Fascism, and not one popularized the results of the Congress. The Eighth Convention of our Party emphasized the importance of work among women in connection with the impending war danger. Yet these serious omissions were made in shops where, in a number of instances, many women were employed.

The examined shop papers showed no reaction to Roosevelt's review of the U. S. Navy in the first week of June, nor did they carry any exposure of the Congressional Munitions Inquiry of September.

Not one of the 69 issues exposed the role of the United States government in supporting Chiang Kai Shek in his campaigns against the Chinese Soviets, except for two that dealt with it from a humanitarian point of view.

We emphasize, of course, the necessity of placing prime importance on the economic struggles of the workers. However, when the agents of the war-mongers spread the theory that war will

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bring jobs, we should be prepared to answer this argument fully, and not in the incorrect manner adopted by one of the shop papers:

> "When war comes, we workers will not find the working conditions and wages the same as it was from 1914-19. That is, the centralization of the industries have cut down on man-power, therefore to carry on the coming imperialist war the government will not need the man-power to the extent that it was used before."

While the majority of the shop papers carried the slogan "Defend the Soviet Union", none carried a clear explanation of why the American working class should do so, despite the importance of explaining the obligations of the international working class toward the Soviet Union, the stronghold of the world proletariat. In addition, not one paper discussed the entrance of the Soviet Union into the League of Nations, or pointed out how this strengthens the struggle against a new imperialist world war.

For an examination of our struggle against fascism, we examined in addition to the aforesaid shop papers, also several regional Party papers. We found that those papers tended in the main to set forth the anti-fascist struggle as a struggle against the terror conducted by the police and hired thugs. The fascist tendencies in Roosevelt's administration, the semi-fascist leadership of the American Legion, the setting up of the notorious Liberty League, the "shirt" organizations springing up over the whole country, are not exposed. Fascism is not explained as the open, terrorist dictatorship of finance capital against the toiling masses. And, except for the campaign for the freedom of Thaelmann, there is very little evidence of any reaction to the struggle of the workers abroad against fascism. In only one paper were the recent events in Austria, France, or Spain analyzed, or a call issued to support the heroic struggles taking place in those countries.

The lone exception was the paper issued by the Party in Seattle, the *Voice of Action*. While the paper deals correctly with a number of questions, it makes bad errors on a subject regarding which it should be most careful.

In an article entitled "Austria, an Example of the Decay of Capitalism", there occurs the statement:

> "Austria today represents a horrible spectacle. We see all the barbarity, all the hideousness of capitalist society in decay. We see all the inherent contradictions of capitalism in full sway. It is interesting to note that Mussolini and Hitler are messing into Austrian affairs not because they are mad adventurists, but as inescapable consequences of the capitalistic system. In other words, imperialism, 'the highest stage of capitalism', demands an exploitation of the weaker nations by the stronger nations.

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> "It is therefore evident that Germany and Italy are being pushed by outside forces (which are often invisible) into an unsavory mess which neither Hitler nor Mussolini desire."

While it is correct to speak about the general contradictions of imperialism in a popular mass paper, a statement like this leaves the impression that the governments and their representatives are pushed, against their wishes, into international conflicts. The Thirteenth Plenum, however, states clearly:

> "The fascist government of Germany, which is the chief instigator of war in Europe, is provoking trouble in Danzig, in Austria, in the Saar, in the Baltic countries and in Scandinavia, and on the pretext of fighting against Versailles, is trying to form a new bloc for the purpose of bringing about a new bloody carving up of Europe for the benefit of German imperialism."

There is no such thing as a peaceful Hitler or Mussolini, driven on by some irresistible outside force. To accept this theory would mean to encourage the illusions which still exist among certain strata of workers in the United States that the government is not a class instrument, but that it is above classes. While their number is decreasing, there are still workers in the coal fields, in the steel industry, as well as in other places who say: "Roosevelt's all right. He is trying to do his best to help the working man, but the bankers don't give him a chance." We know that Roosevelt is a tool of, and spokesman for, finance and monopoly capital. As a result of blatant demagogy, the Democratic Party received tremendous support in the last elections. We shall not enter into a detailed analysis of all the reasons for this; but the main reason is that we have not yet sufficiently exposed Roosevelt's program as being that of the big bankers and industrialists.

Our position on the Negro question plays a vital part in the struggle for Soviet Power, for winning over the majority of the American working class. Yet it still has not been made an integral part of our day-to-day agitation and propaganda. Only in five of the 69 issues was the slogan "Free the Scottsboro Boys" raised, and in none of them was there a word about Angelo Herndon! Our program of full social, economic, and political equality in the North, and for self-determination in the Black Belt was not brought forward in any of our shop papers. There is then no need to be surprised at the spread of Negro reformism, and at the slow growth of our Party's influence among the Negro masses, especially when we take no consistent steps to expose the propaganda of the renegade Padmore—a propaganda which bases itself on the capitalist inspired mistrust of all whites among the Negro masses, a propaganda whose

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central lying theme is that the Party has betrayed the Negro people and is using it as a tool.

When we examine our leaflets, when we see some of the confused slogans and unclear directives issued in strikes and other struggles, when we realize our weakness in bringing forward the face of the Party before the masses, we must come to the conclusion that the nature of our activities does not begin to meet the demands of the present moment. Carelessness, negligence, and inconsistency which lead to reliance upon spontaneity and to opportunism in practice, are danger signals. The leadership of the Party in the districts, sections, and units, must see to it that the entire Party is assisted in understanding this. Otherwise, we shall not carry out our Communist work in the full sense of the word.

Very often we hear the complaint that our comrades must work on too many campaigns, that the tasks among the unemployed, against war, in strikes, elections, among the women, among the youth, in some way conflict and interfere with one another. This attitude flows from the narrow outlook of some of our comrades. Communists must view every individual task they may be carrying out, not from a "departmental point of view", but as a necessary part of our whole movement. We shall be on the road towards the solution of our problem of securing cadres for the many tasks confronting us, only if we begin really to educate our members not by study alone, but also through their own experiences.

There is great fluctuation and unevenness in our work because of the lack of a clear perspective on the part of many of our comrades. Often in small towns, such as in the Illinois coal fields, where the terror is sharp, and where our comrades are not experienced enough to overcome it, they often capitulate, or become pessimistic. In some places impatient leaders look upon comrades who try to read and study, as valueless, abstract "philosophers". This contempt for theory brings about confusion, a confusion which increases with the growing number of new movements, which try to capitalize on the radicalization of the masses. This is especially true today when there are the Utopian movement, Sinclair's EPIC, Father Coughlin's "social justice" organization, the farmer-labor movements, etc. Unless our comrades have a clear perspective, some will give way before these demagogic groups, or ignore them in a sectarian manner. The increased activity of the counter-revolutionary Trotzkyites and the Lovestoneite renegades, the further maneuvers of the Roosevelt government, demand of the Party memebership a higher level of political alertness and understanding in order that these enemies of the working class may be successfully exposed and isolated.

Some comrades distort Comrade Stalin's report to the Seven-

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teenth Convention of the C.P.S.U. by playing with the phrase "organization is all". It is undeniably true that a Party should be judged not only by how well it drafts resolutions, but also by how efficiently it is able to organize their application. But, without day-to-day promotion of our agitation and propaganda, without explaining the Marxist-Leninist theory to the millions who are not yet convinced of the correctness of the line of the Communist Party or who have not even heard of it, and without, at the same time, applying the practical Bolshevik organizational principles, we shall not be building scientifically. We must bear in mind constantly the conditions upon which our daily work depends. These conditions are:

1. To continue making our organizational work commensurate with the requirements of the political line of the Party.

2. To raise organizational leadership to the level of political leadership.

3. To secure that organizational leadership shall fully guarantee the application of the political slogans and decision of the Party. (Stalin, Report.)

Stalin, at the Seventeenth Congress of the C.P.S.U., emphasized emphatically why the Bolshevik Party succeeded:

> "It is due to the fact that it is a Marxian Party, a Leninist Party. It is due to the fact that it is guided in its work by the tenets of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. There can not be any doubt that as long as we remain true to these tenets, as long as we have this compass, we will achieve successes in our work."

What our Party must learn now is how to steer itself by this compass in its everyday work, and how to bring the teachings of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin to the working class and the toiling masses of America. The difficulties of obtaining the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin in English editions have been in a large part overcome. Now comes the still more important question, the question of spreading these books among the widest masses, and the organization of a study circle of workers around each book. How rapidly this task will be carried out depends on how quickly every trained and leading member of the Party becomes a loyal and well-prepared propagandist.

In the near future a national agit-prop conference will be held. Its primary task is to work out a plan to raise the political level of the Party to meet the demands of the present situation. In many districts and sections, leading comrades are not in charge of this most important and decisive sector of our Party work today. This condition must be remedied, and leading comrades placed directly in charge of agit-prop work.

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A number of simple steps must be taken. For example, our shop papers, those very important instruments under our present legal conditions, those instruments which become many times more valuable under semi-legal and illegal conditions, must bring the message of the Party to the workers in the shops. We can improve the contents of these papers, and develop good editors in a very short time if this matter receives the proper attention from the district and section leadership. It is necessary to meet with the editors regularly, to give them the main outlines of the issues on a city, state and national scale, and to prepare them to evaluate issues correctly by themselves.

From time to time, the actives of the given Party organization must be called together for a report and discussion on the main issues and tasks of the coming period. Here all comrades will have an opportunity to clarify themselves on essential questions. In our newspapers, we must bring forward incessantly our position on the way out and the struggle for power.

Classes must be established for the new members of our Party, and a minimum of one free day a week must be fixed for them for study. In addition to the present system of education in the Party, such as the Workers Schools, and the National Training School, we propose the formation of a Communist correspondence school, where organizers, leading members of fractions in trade unions and mass organizations, members of concentration sections and units may study through correspondence courses. A consultation service should also be organized in conjunction with such a school.

Besides the establishment of functioning literature departments, it is essential that all comrades carry with them our most important pieeces of literature, spread them among the widest possible masses of workers, and organize study circles of workers, particularly in our concentration districts and seections. Especially must we popularize the achievements of the Soviet Union, to illustrate our agitation and propaganda for Soviet Power.

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Some Problems of the Class Struggle in the South

By NAT ROSS

(Discussion for the Seventh Congress of the Communist International)

THE South has always been the most backward economic section of the United States. This arises primarily out of the fact that at the foundation of Southern society is the semi-feudal system of share-cropping, the main economic hangover of chattel slavery. It is upon this basis that the system of national oppression of the Negroes has developed, as well as the main forms of Southern industrial, social, political, and cultural life. But it was only in the past years of economic crisis and the New Deal that the Communist Party and the labor movement in the South were able to bring out in bold relief before the entire country the really backward and slave essence of capitalist society in the South.

ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE SOUTH

The relative economic position of the South can be shown by a few figures. If we take the ten cotton States, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, we find, for example, that in 1922 per capita wealth was $1,635, whereas in the other States it was $3,313. Or, taking the view from another angle, these ten States which have 22 per cent of the nation's population have 12½ per cent of the nation's wealth. Another figure: during the period 1924-28, the gross annual farm income per capita in the cotton States was $242, as against $493 in the other States. In 1930, after the first year of economic crisis, the figure for the cotton States had plunged down to $153. In this same year, according to the census figures of manufacturing, these ten States had 12½ per cent of the nation's workers in manufacturing. Yet

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they produced only 8.7 per cent of the value added to manufactures and received 8.6 per cent of the nation's wages.

If we glance at the situation today under the New Deal, the same picture stands out in even bolder relief. The failure of heavy industry to make any real pickup has a serious effect upon the whole economic life of the South. According to the latest statistics, production in coal, iron, and steel in October is still heading downward, despite a pickup in other scattered industries. The heaviest blow struck against the Southern workers was the establishment by the N.R.A. of the wage differential of from 10 to 50 per cent. The amount of the differential varies generally in direct proportion to the number of Negroes in the industry. Where the Negroes predominate, as in the steel, coal, laundry, and lumber industries, the N.R.A. differential ranges between 33 1-3 and 50 per cent. Where the Negroes are in the minority, as in the textile industry, the differential averages about 10 per cent. The rule established by the Roosevelt government was simply this: Southern labor as a whole was to receive lower wages than the rest of the country. In addition, the Negro in the South was to receive lower wages than the white worker in the South. The Southern white worker received lower wages than the workers elsewhere, but was supposed to have the flimsy satisfaction of getting a little more than the Negro. But he is fast recognizing that, as long as the Negro is kept in the ditch, as a Southern expression has it, the white worker will be in there with him, or at least damn close to it.

The relief picture in Alabama also tells a striking story. With 104,000 families on relief in October, it is announced that this number will be cut to 50,000 by January. In Jefferson County (Birmingham), 118,850 people are on relief rolls. This is 28 per cent of the total population and is an increase of 30 per cent on relief rolls as compared with the same period last year. When one also considers the thousands of starving families who are refused relief in Jefferson County, the real seriousness of the situation becomes evident. F.E.R.A. figures have shown right along that the average relief in the South was less than half that of the rest of the country. The average monthly family relief for the South in September was less than $10, compared with $24 in the rest of the country.

Apparently this was not a sufficient attack on the Southern toilers, so the Roosevelt administration withdrew the 30c an hour minimum relief wage and instituted a minimum relief wage in line with the wages in the community. In many sections of the South this will mean 50c to $1.25 a day on relief instead of the former $2.40 minimum. This has already happened in a number of sections. Thus, the Roosevelt government openly shows its role as

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the leading wage-cutter in the United States, since this order will not only lower the wage of the Southern workers, but will be used as a blackjack against the whole American working class.

If we go into the cotton fields of the South, we will find that the chronic crisis in cotton, beginning in the post-War period, has made the situation for the toiling masses even more horrible than the conditions of the city workers. A few figures will indicate this clearly. Fifty years ago, while cotton was still "King Cotton" in the South, 71 per cent of the world's cotton supply was produced in the Southern States; fifteen years ago, only 61 per cent; and in 1933, only 41 per cent. According to the figures for this year, the production of cotton in the South has declined 40 per cent, while the production of world cotton, excluding the South, increased 40 per cent. In the statistical year 1919-20, cotton exported from the South amounted to $1,137,000,000. In 1933-34 it had fallen to $438,000,000. The fact that Southern cotton has always been mainly an export crop only helps to intensify to the highest degree the crisis in cotton.

A few more facts will indicate the misery that faces the Southern toilers. For example: In Alabama in 1934, 106,000 children of school age were illiterate—an increase of 10,000 over 1932. 64,000 of these were Negro, 42,000 were white children. In Birmingham, according to figures of the Board of Health, the consumption of milk is 62 per cent below normal, and 20 per cent of the families with school children do without milk entirely.

What is the economic perspective in the lower South? The *Birmingham News* states editorially:

> "Possibly for the first time since the war between the States, the South is now witnessing a concerted effort to deal with an economically unprofitable and a socially unjust method of agriculture in the South. At last it appears that a responsible and powerful agency [Farm Rehabilitation!] has become interested in the plight of the Southern share-croppers—both white and black—who have always been rendered helpless and unproductive by the clumsy tenant farming structure, which is really no more than a survival of the spirit underlying the institution of human slavery."

As a result of the development of the economic crisis, and the drive of the New Deal toward monopolization, the conflict within various sections of the ruling class has sharpened. The further penetration of finance capital into Southern industry (steel, coal, textile, railroad, shipping, public utilities) and agriculture has sharpened the conflict, not only between sections of finance capital, but also between sections of finance capital and local capital in industry and in agriculture. The use of the South as the hinterland of

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American economy, as the section where the attack on the conditions of the masses is to be the most sharp and brutal, as a pacemaker for the rest of the country, is agreed on by the whole ruling class. At the same time, Southern industry is being driven more and more into a secondary position (except in the war industries) in the sense that it may not be allowed to compete with monopolized industry in the East and North. That sections of Southern capital are dissatisfied, is seen in the bitter struggle against the base point price fixing in steel ("Pittsburgh plus") established by the N.R.A., which continues the monopoly of United States Steel. It is seen in the struggle on the part of Southern capital against the high freight rates which prevent Southern products from penetrating the Northern and export markets. The attitude of certain local capitalists who find that the drive toward monopoly of the N.R.A. is theatening their own existence, is seen in the statement of an Alabama manufacturer who said, "Sherman's march to the sea was no more destructive than the N.R.A. is going to be to the South. Before it is over, we may have secession." This conflict between sections of finance capital and the local capitalists in industry and agriculture also forms one of the main bases for the demagogy of Huey Long, Bilbo, Talmadge, etc. At the same time, the conflict within Southern capital, between industry and agriculture, on the question of the tariff, taxes, etc., is becoming sharper. But while this fight for the spoils becomes more intense, the fundamental agreement among the capitalists in line with the New Deal policy remains: namely, to place the full burden of the crisis first and foremost on the Negro masses, and along with them the main masses of Southern white toilers. There is a difference of opinion as to just what form this attack should assume. However, at its recent meeting, the South-Eastern Chamber of Commerce came out openly for widening the wage differential, for cutting relief, and for an attack on the labor unions. It was stated that "continuance of the Southern wage differential was held essential to the future prosperity of Southern industry". At the time of the Chamber of Commerce meeting, the laundry operators in Birmingham began a fight against the N.R.A. hourly wage minimum of 16-2/3 and demanded a 14-cent minimum. In the fight against relief, especially to strikers, John E. Edgerton, president of the Southern Industrialists Association, declared that "Even God didn't decree that no one should go hungry".

THE CLASS STRUGGLE DEVELOPS

In this situation, the solid South was beginning to stir below. The Southern masses were beginning to move, and, as the Communist Party had always said, when they began to move, they

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moved fast. In a period of a few months, hundreds of thousands of white and Negro workers joined the unions. Workers and farmers were organizing throughout the South. Discussion of political and economic questions among the masses spread. The Southern masses were in motion against the attacks of the ruling class. The most important struggles in recent years in the South were the coal and ore miners' strikes in Alabama in the Spring, and the general textile strike in September. These strikes taught the Southern working class more than it had learned in the previous half-century. It showed the workers that they had strength if they united their forces and fought militantly. They began to see through the demagogy of Roosevelt's N.R.A. and the role of the government in breaking strikes through arbitration or force and violence aganist strikers. The masses began to see that the big officials in their A. F. of L. unions were really on the side of the bosses and the government and against the strikers. In these strikes, the Negroes showed that they could fight, that they were union men to the core. There was a time in Birmingham when many white workers would tell you that the Negro was naturally a scab and could not be organized. Right after the coal and ore strikes in Birmingham, I heard five white workers at a meeting say unanimously that "the Negroes had shown that they were real union men and fighters". And it was clear that the white workers were beginning to see the Negro as a union brother, as a fellow-fighter in the class struggle, even though they were not yet ready to accept the full Communist position on the Negro question. The capitalist lies about the Negro being a natural scab had extended to the Southern white worker who was supposed to be anti-union, docile, individualistic, etc. But the strikes throughout the South smashed this damnable lie once and for all. The highest testimonial to the ingenuity, the fighting and organizing capacity of the Southern white proletariat, was shown by the development of the flying squadrons during the textile strike. This is a form of militant struggle which has penetrated the minds of tens of thousands of workers. What stood out most during the strikes in the South, was the growing unity and solidarity of white and Negro labor, together in the union hall, and side by side on the picket lines facing the machine guns. Despite the lynch incitements of the bosses and the splitting efforts of the white and Negro reformists, the unity of white and Negro toilers fighting for their common needs, demonstrated the growing consciousness of the Southern working class. No matter what else happened during the strikes, this single fact turned over a new page in the history of the class struggle in the South.

During this period, the share-croppers and poor farmers were stirring. The first struggles led by the Share Croppers' Union, such

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as Camp Hill in 1931, and Reeltown in 1932 against confiscation of stock, indicated that these were forerunners of bigger struggles by the exploited farming masses, ground down in the deepest oppression. The first organized struggle in the Alabama Black Belt which really affected the farming masses throughout the South, was the cotton pickers' strike in the summer of 1934. This strike, which involved about 1,000 farm laborers and croppers in the Tallapoosa area, is no doubt one of the most significant actions which has taken place in the agrarian Black Belt. It shows clearly that out of these partial struggles, the struggle for the land and for self-determination is taking shape. The fight against the average 50 cents a day for picking cotton won the sympathy, not only of the Negro masses, but of the toiling white farmers and laborers as well. It was precisely this struggle that actually opened the door of the Share Croppers' Union to the white croppers. In this period, also, the Share Croppers' Union was able to develop a movement against the A.A.A. and the Bankhead Act and their devastating effect on the farming masses. If we take some earlier figures, we can then get a glimpse of the effect of the Bankhead Act in 1934. From 1920-30 there was an increase of 29,000 cropping families, an increase of 30 per cent. In 1930, there were 390,000 families of Negro croppers and 338,000 white families. The total number of croppers and their dependents was about 3,250,000. Less than 30 per cent of the cotton farmers cultivated their own land. Among the Negroes this figure was very much lower. If this is a bird's eye view of 1930, one can say that the A.A.A. and the Bankhead Act, despite the referendum vote in favor of the Bankhead Act, have intensified the misery of the toiling farmers so thoroughly that masses of them are seeking a way out in organization and struggle. And in this situation the united front between the Share Croppers' Union and Southern Tenant-Farmers' Union opens the road of struggle of the masses of Southern toilers against their own landlords and the Roosevelt New Deal in cotton.

WHAT SCOTTSBORO MEANS

In reviewing the past few years of struggles in the South, the struggle for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys occupies a pivotal position, running through these years of struggle like a red thread affecting the development of the class struggle in the South and affecting all layers and classes, both white and Negro, in Southern society. A Negro ore-miner who had been working for the Republic Steel Corporation for 28 years and had been fired for strike activity, said the following: "I always wanted freedom. Every day I went down into the mine, I thought about freedom. All of us

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Negro miners wanted freedom, but we figured we could never get it. When we heard of Scottsboro, that meant freedom. From then on we knew we could win." This simple statement summarizes profoundly how the Scottsboro fight, despite the disruptive actions of Leibowitz and his gang, has stirred the entire Negro population, how the Communist light has pierced through the dark alleys, through company shack and cotton patches. It means that Scottsboro has opened up the hearts of the Negro masses in which lay hidden the ever-burning hatred against the lynch system and the smouldering desire for freedom. Scottsboro and the recent struggle in the South have aroused a fighting spirit in the Negro masses which cannot be subdued. In the words of the Eighth National Convention of our Party.

"The struggle of the Negro masses against national oppression has become a major question in the political life of the country as a whole. And the significance of the Negro liberation movement as a factor in the sharpening of the crisis of American capitalism has been tremendously increased. The present situation in the South is most favorable for broad mass struggle against the national oppression of the Negroes."

THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE SOUTH

As to the role and influence of the Communist Party in these developments, we will first let the capitalists themselves speak.

During the strike wave in Birmingham, immediately following this divine-like foresight of the T.C.I. president, the press declared: "The T.C.I. officials have laid the responsibility for much of the unrest of the Company at the door of Communist agitators". Echoing these thoughts, Robert Moore, president of the State Federation of Labor, declared at the same time that "Communism is running rampant in Alabama", and recently followed this with another of his famous declarations: "We intend to go to the bat with the Communist element which has worked its way into our organization. A Communist round-up is already under way in Alabama, with the vice-presidents of each of the eight Alabama districts making personal surveys of this district in an effort to definitely spot offenders who will be summarily ousted and their names turned over to authorities."

There is no question that as a result of the activity of the Party and its participation in the struggle, the message of Communism has won the hearts of thousands of Southern toilers. The high prestige of the Party among the Southern masses, gained in such a short space of time, is perhaps the most decisive and convincing proof that the program of the Party is the only correct program

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for the South. But we Communists do not speak of our progress in the South with a sense of self-satisfaction, because bigger tasks are ahead, because the crying possibilities for a manifold increase in all of our work exist, and finally because the Party has only begun its difficult but triumphant march in the South.

What has been the outstanding and basic mistake in our work? It can be put briefly: We did not recognize in action that the Party's chief task was, in the words of the Open Letter, "to become rooted in the decisive industrial centers and the important big factories". This task was all the more important because the most distinguishing and *peculiar* feature in our district was the fact that, side by side with a vast semi-feudal agriculture, there stood the giant heavy industry of the Birmingham area, dominated by the T.C.I. Certainly here the key teachings of the Open Letter applied with full force. The whole meaning of concentration, and the significance of the Leninist teachings on the hegemony of the proletariat in the Negro liberation struggle and in the struggle for a Soviet America applied forcefully.

It was precisely the letter of the Central Committee to our District in January, 1934, that electrified our District into recognizing that a drastic change in our methods of work was imperative and that the face of the entire Party must be turned toward the heavy industries of the Birmingham area. The Central Committee declared with great force, concretizing the Open Letter, that "because there is a large organized share-croppers' movement which looks for guidance to the Party, because the main vital roots of the organized struggle for the right of self-determination are found in the peasant mass of Negroes in District 17, precisely for these reasons is it all the more extremely necessary to build the Communist Party in District 17 in the most solid position in the basic industries".

It was not until our District began to make the turn that we were able to make real headway among the proletarian masses. The correction of this mistake helped us to correct a number of other mistakes which flowed from this mistake. I will deal with one of these. It goes without saying that the Negro question is the pivot of all questions of the class struggle in the South. By its bold fight for equal rights for Negroes, our Party has won the sympathy of broad masses of Negroes. The weakness of the Party consisted in the slowness with which it was winning the masses of white workers for the struggle for equal rights, due to the fact that we failed to explain properly and concretely the Communist position on the national question. We did not show with sufficient simplicity and concreteness that the Southern white worker, in fighting for equal rights for the Negro, was fighting for his *own* immediate interests,

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that this was the *only* way he could fight for his own daily needs and, at the same time, in the direct interests of the proletarian revolution. It was only with the turn toward the shops that we were able to show in the simplest way, by using the daily events, how the lynching of a Negro means more starvation for the white workers, how the drive against the Scottsboro boys is part of whole drive to widen the wage differential. We were able to show, as we did during the strike period, that the wage differential is an N.R.A. revival of a form of chattel slavery in industry which affects primarily the Negroes, but also the main mass of white workers. Not to understand this phase of the struggle for Negro rights in the present juncture of events in the South, is to fail to be able to unify the white and Negro toilers in common struggle, to fail to lead the white workers to carry out their revolutionary duty of marching at the front of the struggle for Negro rights. And it is precisely this phase of the struggle that will develop the fighting capacity of the Negro workers to a higher stage of class struggle, just as, for example, the struggles of the Negro share-croppers developed a desire for action and organization among sections of white croppers.

THE GROWTH OF FASCISM AND REFORMISM

The Southern ruling class, accustomed to non-union labor and to a split working class, certainly does not take the rapid development of unionism, unity of white and Negro workers, development of struggle and a revolutionary spirit in a passive way. The Southern capitalists are desperately and rapidly preparing to head off this whole development by increasing the use of the fascist and reformist agents. The possibilities for the more rapid spread of fascism in the South than elsewhere in the country, exist for the following reasons: (1) The depening chaos in Southern industry and agriculture and the revealing rottenness of the whole structure, based on Negro oppression. (2) The intensification of the customary brutal violence against the Negroes as a means to stop their developing rebellious spirit and to curb the growth of mass organizations and struggles. (3) The confusion and class collaboration policies of the reformists centering their tactic on intensifying race prejudice and splitting the working class.

At the same time, because of these given reasons, Roosevelt's Democratic Party, in conjunction with its Southern representatives, is using the traditional backwardness and reaction in the South, and the traditional persecution of Negroes, as the testing ground for its fascist methods and technique, to be applied throughout the country. This is seen in the murder of over 25 strikers on Southern

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picket lines, the support given to the building of company unions, and the crude arbitration schemes engineered by the labor boards in the South.

A whole fascist ideology is being built up among the white middle class in city and on farm and among the thin strata of the labor aristocracy on the basis of prejudice against Negroes and Communists. This ideology is also given a "sociological" basis, as, for example, in a recent *Birmingham News'* editorial: "There is a tremendous difference between the Italian and German forms of what is called Fascism. Mussolini's system of government operates successfully in Italy and it seems suited to the present temperament of the Italian people as well as to the peculiar conditions of that country."

Many leading Southern politicians, such as Long, Bilbo, Tom Knight, etc., are moving in the direction of fascism, while at the same time they utter much demagogy and make fine reformist promises. The line of the new State Administration in Alabama is indicated in a recent speech of Tom Knight, now the Lieutenant-Governor, when he said, "Communism is a movement which must be stamped out by armed force, if necessary". At the same time, preparations are being made for the passage of anti-Communist laws in the Southern State legislatures, providing for 5-20 year sentences for Communist membership. In Birmingham already, an amendment to the city code declares it shall be a crime punishable with a sentence on the convict gang for anyone who "shall knowingly circulate or publicly display any book, paper, etc., advocating the doctrine that organized government should be overthrown by force, violence, or any unlawful means or shall have in possession more than one copy of any such book, paper, etc." In line with the fascization of the legislative, executive and judicial processes in Southern States, recent lynchings have shown the direct connivance and support given to the mobs by local as well as higher government authorities in the South. There is also a terrific development of out and out fascist organization. Norman Thomas says sarcastically, "We just laugh at them [shirt outfits]". But in Birmingham alone, we have seen in the last few months the revival of the K.K.K., the birth of the White Legion, Silver Shirts, Black Shirts, Crusaders, and Knights of the Green Dragon, and a host of other fascist rackets. While there is some conflict among these organizations over the spoils, they have one common program, namely, the mobilization of the white middle class and sections of the backward white workers on an open anti-Negro and anti-Communist program and a veiled anti-union, anti-labor program. The important thing about these murder gangs is their close integration with the State apparatus and authorities and their methods of work.

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Birmingham is an important war center. One and a half million shells can be produced here monthly, at a conservative estimate. Major Harry Smith, Commander of the Third Battalion of the National Guards, announces in the press: "Birmingham Communists have found another place to scatter their Red propaganda in the National Guard Rifle Range. The range has been littered with this propaganda several times recently, but we have at last found out who is doing it and are taking steps to stop it."

Side by side with the development of fascism is the growth of the reformist tendencies in the South. The main channel for reformism in the labor movement is the A. F. of L. bureaucracy, supported by sections of the Socialist leadership and by the Negro reformist leadership in the N.A.A.C.P., and similar organizations. While making fascist attacks on the Communists, the Alabama A. F. of L. bureaucracy maps out a 13-point program of labor legislation, which makes class collaboration and legalism the cornerstone of its policy. They even claim to support the struggle for unemployment insurance. But in actual practice, the A. F. of L. bureaucracy of Birmingham and Alabama has acted as police agents and provocateurs in the fight against the National Congress for Unemployment and Social Insurance and the support for the genuine workers' bill. These reformist misleaders, under pressure of the masses, have been forced to carry on a campaign for organization of women and unemployed in union auxiliaries. While compelled to bring white and Negro workers together in the same unions, the bureaucrats do everything possible to prevent real unity. In the Blue Eagle Lodge of the Amalgamated Association, the officials have initiated a vote to see whether it would not be better for the white members to meet on one night and the Negroes on another. The indignation of the trade union masses in the T.C.I. territory, especially among the coal and ore miners, succeeded in smashing this miserable plot.

Between the bureaucrats in the A. F. of L. and the Socialist Party and the reformist leaders of the N.A.A.C.P., there is an unholy division of labor. The white bureaucrats try to prevent the white workers from solidarizing with the Negroes, while the Negro misleaders sow mistrust in the minds of the Negro masses against the white workers. Some of the "Left" reformists speak about economic and political equality, but not social equality. Others claim to be for "social equality" but against self-determination. Linked up with this tendency of the reformists in the South is their emphasis that better conditions can be won, not through revolutionary struggle, but by currying favor with the ruling class. The Negro reformists who are concentrating their attack against the I.L.D. in its fight for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys, are

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trying to cement an alliance with the liberal bourgeois elements in the South, who in practice try to sugarcoat the lynch and hunger program of the Southern ruling class. There is also a growth of independent local organization of white and Negro toilers looking for militant action, but in many cases led by people who cover up their hatred for militant action by bombastic speeches.

THE UNITED FRONT—KEY TO THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE SOUTH

It is precisely in this situation, briefly described above, that the resolution of the District Committee in November declared, "The most burning need of the moment is the united front of the white and Negro masses, in common struggle against the capitalists and their slick-tongued agents". Our Party in the South has struggled persistently to build a united working class front. The fact that recently certain victories have been achieved in the South is due to the persistent struggle of the Communist Party for this front, the radicalization of the masses and their desire for unity, which has driven many Socialist leaders into united front negotiations and action. The particular and decisive importance of the united front in the South against the terrible menace of fascism is seen already in the developments in New Orleans, between the Socialist Party and the Communist Party, and the auspicious beginnings of combined actions in the agrarian regions between the Share Croppers' Union and the Southern Tenant-Farmers' Union. This is further developed by the splendid united front statement issued on December 6 by leaders of the Socialist Party in five Southern States, and two national leaders, after a conference with the representative of the Communist Party in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The District Buro of District 17 hailed this document and its call for joint struggle on immediate issues as one of the most significant steps forward of the whole labor movement in the South. At the same time, the District Buro emphasized the imperative need for bringing this document before the broad masses and, on the basis of it, develop a powerful united front mass movement against the danger of war and developing fascism and for the needs of the masses, with its basis in the factories and the trade unions, as well as among the unemployed, among the farming masses, and in the struggle for Negro rights. This tactic must actually become the red thread that runs through every single action of the Communist Party in the South.

WHAT NEXT?

Our task in the trade unions must be in line with the December 6 document to carry on a "campaign to unionize the South and

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to develop an aggressive rank-and-file trade union movement in the A. F. of L., on the basis of equal rights for Negroes and the unity of white and Negro labor." This united front slogan must unify the entire rank and file membership of the A. F. of L. in a militant struggle against the company unions, against the wage differential, and against the labor bureaucracy whose policies can only help to weaken the unions. In this respect, the building of organized rank-and-file groups and the winning of locals for militant action is on the order of the day. The influence of the Communist Party among the trade union masses in the Birmingham area is increasing. A number of militant leaders of the unions have joined the Party; a large number of Negro unionists have shown their support for the Party. An important railroad local of white workers recently threw William Green's anti-red letter into the waste basket and condemned it. The corporations are desperately trying to destroy the unions and build the company unions. The Alabama Fuel and Iron Company recently shut its coal mine, declaring that it was doing this because the miners had joined the U.M.W. of A. And now it is preparing to evict all the miners from its Overton camp. The T.C.I. and Republic Steel Corporation threaten union men with eviction unless they join the company union. Men who refuse to join the company union are cut off from relief, and Negro union men are threatened with death by the company thugs. More than ever before, the searchlight of the Party must be focused on the big factories and the unions, so that the District can follow out the major instruction in the Open Letter.

In the Black Belt, the united front between the Share Croppers' Union and the Southern Tenant-Farmers' Union must be developed on a broader scale, involving large masses of toiling farmers. The united front action in preparation for the cotton choppers' strike in the Spring and the struggles against the effect of the A.A.A. and the Bankhead Bill must be the pivotal point of the united front in the cotton fields. The drawing of white croppers into the Share Croppers' Union as a result of the cotton pickers' strike paves the way for unity of white and Negro croppers in the Black Belt. At the same time, in the Black Belt, committees of action of white croppers and farmers, and outside the Black Belt, where necessary, separate organizations of white farmers shall be formed as a preliminary step toward unity. In order to insure a proper proletarian basis to the movement, it is necessary for the Party and the Share Croppers' Union to concentrate their attention on the agricultural workers in the Black Belt and on the industrial workers in the factories throughout this area.

As part of these next steps, must go the building of the Party, primarily in the big factories and mines of the Birmingham area,

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on the basis of a plan of concentration and strict check-up. Experience has taught us that our concentration must be consolidated. We must consolidate our influence in the factories on the basis of recruiting and cutting down fluctuation, meeting in small groups, developing a real political life, building self-defense corps, initiating struggles in the factories, because only on the basis of militant action can we win the fighting Southern proletarians and retain them. At the same time, we have found that one of the major tasks in building the Party and developing struggles in this District is the need to prepare in advance to gear our entire machinery and apparatus to work under conditions of terror. Failure to do this on the part of any section or district, failure to prepare the Party machinery consciously and deliberately to function in the period of oncoming terror can do such harm as to offset years of previous hard work. This, in some respects, has been the bitter experience of our Party in District 17. It is necessary to build the Party in the period of terror and not to allow, as we have witnessed in our own District in the past months, a slowing down in the tempo of recruiting even at a time when fascist reaction is increasing. In this period, the training of cadres, new workers from the mines and mills, the development of their initiative, schooling them in Marxism-Leninism, conducting a real fight for the line of the Party, combatting white chauvinist and Negro nationalist tendencies, on the basis of developing a real spirit of self-criticism, of collective work and individual responsibility, becomes more urgent than ever before.

In the struggle against fascism and reformism in particular, our Party in the South must learn to become leading fighters for the daily needs of the masses, proving in action that only mass struggle under revolutionary leadership can force concessions from the lynch rulers. It is necessary to popularize the achievements of the Soviet Union and to give a living picture to the Southern masses of what a Soviet America would do for them. This means that we must deal more specifically and concretely with the concept of self-determination in the Black Belt, concretely linking it up with major developments, the strike struggles and the struggles of the share-croppers in the South. All of the treasure house of knowledge and experience that Marxism-Leninism offers us on the national question must be brought into living actuality in the South. The struggle for the land, for the agrarian revolution as the axis of struggle for Negro liberation, must be painted in clear colors, as part of the everyday struggles against Negro persecution, against the wage differential, for unemployment insurance, for the right of the share-croppers to sell and gin their own cotton, etc. Insofar as the Party develops real struggles, leading to the struggle for self-determination, the Negro masses as a whole will support us to

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a certain extent in the struggle toward the establishment of Soviet Power. At the same time, in sharpening the fight against the Negro bourgeoisie and the reformists, our Party in the South must struggle for the hegemony of the proletariat as the driving force in the liberation movement. We must explain our position on the right of self-determinattion as a full democratic right and the concept of separation as part of this free democratic right, in line with the developing concrete situation. One of the most crucial questions in this whole struggle is the development of the unity of white and Negro workers, the need of the Party to point out on the basis of our everyday struggle the duty of the revolutionary white workers to march at the front of the struggle for Negro rights, their role in the struggle for the right of self-determination of Negroes in the Black Belt, and the position of the toiling whites at the outcome of the struggle. The white workers can be won for this struggle if they are convinced that this is the only way to free themselves as well as the Negroes, and that the whole struggle for self-determination is an integral part of the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a Soviet America, which alone can finally abolish the misery and slavery that weigh down the toiling Negro and white masses of the South.

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The Three Basic Slogans of the Party on the Peasant Question

By JOSEPH STALIN

(*Rrom The October Revolution.*)

(*Reply to* COMRADE YAN—SKY)

COMRADE YAN—SKY,

I, of course, duly received your letter. I am replying after some delay, for which please forgive me.

1. Lenin says that "*the main question of every revolution is, undoubtedly, the question of state power.*"* (*Cf.* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXI, "One of the Fundamental Questions of the Revolution.") In the hands of which class, or which classes, is power concentrated; which class, or which classes, must be overthrown; which class, or which classes, must take power—such is "the main question of every revolution."

The basic strategic slogans of the Party that retain their validity during the whole period of any particular stage of the revolution cannot be designated basic slogans if they are not fully and completely founded on this cardinal thesis of Lenin's. Basic slogans are correct slogans only if they are built on the basis of a Marxian analysis of class forces, only if they indicate the correct plan of disposition of the revolutionary forces along the front of the class struggle, only if they assist in bringing the masses up to the front of the struggle for the triumph of the revolution and for the seizure of power by the new class, and only if they assist the Party in forming a large and powerful political army from among the broad masses of the people, which is essential for the fulfilment of this task.

Defeats and retreats, failures and tactical errors may occur during any given stage of the revolution; but that does not mean that the fundamental strategical slogan is wrong. For instance, the basic slogan during the *first* stage of our revolution, namely, "together with the whole peasantry, against the tsar and the land-

* My italics.—*J. S.*

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lords, with the bourgeoisie neutralized, for the triumph of the bourgeois-democratic revolution" was an absolutely correct slogan, in spite of the fact that the Revolution of 1905 was unsuccessful.

In other words, we must not confuse the question of the basic slogan of the Party with the question of the defeat or failure of the revolution at any particular stage of its development.

It may happen that in the course of the revolution the basic slogan of the Party may have already led to the overthrow of the power of the old classes, or of the old class, but that a number of essential demands of the revolution, following from that slogan, have not been achieved or that their achievement has been delayed for a long period of time, or that their achievement may require a new revolution. Nevertheless, that would not mean that the basic slogan is wrong. For instance, the February Revolution of 1917 overthrew tsarism and the landlords, but it did not lead to the confiscation of the estates of the landlords, and so on. That, however, does not mean that our basic slogan in the first stage of the revolution was wrong. Or, further, the October Revolution brought about the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the transfer of power to the proletariat, but did not immediately lead to (a) the final completion of the bourgeois revolution in general and (b) the isolation of the kulaks in the rural districts in particular; these were delayed for a certain period of time. That however does not mean that our basic slogan during the *second* stage of the revolution, namely, "together with the poorest peasantry, against capitalism in town and country, with the middle peasantry neutralized, for the power of the proletariat," was wrong.

In other words, the question of the basic slogan of the Party must not be confused with the question of the time and forms of achieving any particular demand arising out of that slogan.

Consequently, the strategic slogans of our Party cannot be judged from the point of view of episodical successes or defeats of the revolutionary movement in any particular period; still less can it be judged from the point of view of the times or forms of achieving any particular demands that arise out of those slogans. The strategic slogan of the Party can be judged only from the point of view of a Marxian analysis of the class forces and of the correct disposition of the revolutionary forces on the battle front of the struggle for the triumph of the revolution and the concentration of power in the hands of the new class.

Your error, Comrade Yan—sky, is that you overlooked, or did not understand, this important methodological question.

2. You write in your letter:

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> "Is it correct to assert that we were in alliance with the whole peasantry *only* up to October? No, it is not. The slogan of an 'alliance with the whole peasantry' was in effect before October, *during October and in the first period after October*, inasmuch as the whole peasantry was interested in completing the bourgeois revolution."

From this quotation it follows that the strategic slogan of the Party in the *first* stage of the revolution (1905 to February 1917), when the task was to overthrow the power of the tsar and the landlords and to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, *did not differ* from the strategical slogan of the *second* stage of the revolution (February 1917 to October 1917), when the task was to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie and to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. In other words, you deny the fundamental difference between the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the proletarian-socialist revolution. You commit this error because, apparently, you will not understand so simple a matter as that the basic theme of a strategic slogan is the question of power in the particular stage of the revolution, the question as to *which* class is being overthrown and into the hands of *which* class power is being transferred. It need hardly be shown that on this point you are grievously mistaken.

You state that we applied the slogan of an "alliance with the *whole* peasantry" during October, as well as in the first period after October, inasmuch as the whole peasantry was interested in completing the bourgeois revolution. But who told you that the October insurrection and the October Revolution were confined to, or made it their basic task to complete, the bourgeois revolution? Where did you get that from? Can the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat be effected within the framework of the bourgeois revolution? Does not the achievement of the dictatorship of the proletariat mean breaking through the framework of the bourgeois revolution? How can you assert that the kulaks (who, of course, are also peasants) could support the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the transfer of power to the proletariat? How it can be denied that the decree on the nationalization of the land, the abolition of private property in land, the prohibition of the purchase and the sale of land, etc., in spite of the fact that it cannot be regarded as a socialist decree, was carried out by us in a *struggle against* the kulaks, and not in alliance with them? How can it be asserted that the kulaks (who are also peasants) could support the decrees of the Soviet power regarding the expropriation of mills and factories, railways, banks, etc., or the slogan of the proletariat regarding the transformation of the im-

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perialist war into a civil war? How can it be asserted that it was not these and similar acts, not the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat that represented the *fundamental* feature of October, but the completion of the bourgeois revolution?

No one denies that one of the chief aims of the October Revolution was to complete the bourgeois revolution, that the latter could not have been completed without the October Revolution, just as the October Revolution itself could not have been consolidated without the bourgeois revolution having been completed; and that, inasmuch as the October Revolution completed the bourgeois revolution, it could not but meet with the sympathy of all the peasants. All that is undeniable. But can it for this reason be asserted that the completion of the bourgeois revolution was not a derivative of the October Revolution but its essential feature, its chief aim? What then becomes of the chief aim of the October Revolution, namely, the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war, the expropriation of the capitalists, etc.? And if the main theme of a strategic slogan is the basic question of every revolution, *i.e.*, the question of transfer of power from one class to another class, is it not obvious that the question of the completion of the bourgeois revolution by the proletarian power must not be confused with the question of the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the proletarian power and the conquest of that proletarian power, *i.e.*, with the question that represented the main theme of the strategic slogan of the second stage of the revolution.

One of the greatest merits of the dictatorship of the proletariat lies in the fact that it completed the bourgeois revolution and entirely swept away the debris of medievalism. This was of supreme and indeed decisive importance for the rural districts; without it that association of peasant wars with the proletarian revolution of which Marx spoke in the second half of the last century could not have been achieved. Without it the proletarian revolution itself could not have been consolidated. Moreover, the following important circumstance should be borne in mind. The completion of the bourgeois revolution was not a single act. In fact it was spread over a whole period embracing not only parts of 1918, as you assert in your letter, but also parts of 1919 (the Volga provinces and the Urals) and of 1919 and 1920 (the Ukraine), I am referring to the advance of Kolchak and Denikin, when the peasantry, as a whole, was faced with the danger of the restoration of the power of the landlords and when the peasantry precisely as a *whole* was obliged to rally around the Soviet power in order to ensure the completion

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of the bourgeois revolution and to preserve the fruits of that revolution. We must always bear in mind the complexity and variety of the processes of actual experience, the "fantastic" interweaving of the immediate socialist tasks of the dictatorship with the task of completing the bourgeois revolution, if we are to understand correctly both the quotations from Lenin cited above and the mechanics of achieving the Party slogans. Can it be asserted that this interweaving proves that the slogan of the Party in the *second* stage of the revolution was wrong, and that this slogan does not differ from the slogan of the *first* stage of the revolution? Not at all. On the contrary, this interweaving merely confirms the correctness of the Party slogan in the second stage of the revolution, namely, together with the *poorest* peasantry, against the capitalist bourgeoisie in town and country, for the power of the proletariat, etc. Why? Because in order to complete the bourgeois revolution it was *first* necessary, in October, to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie and to set up the power of the proletariat, for only this power is capable of completing the bourgeois revolution. And in order to set up the power of the proletariat in October it was necessary to prepare and organize, for October, the *requisite* political army, which would be capable of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and of setting up the power of the proletariat. And there is no need to prove that *such* a political army could be prepared and organized *only* under the slogan: an alliance of the proletariat with the poorest peasantry, against the bourgeoisie, for the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is obvious that without *this* strategic slogan, which we carried out from April 1917 until October 1917, we would never have had such a political army; in other words, we would not have triumphed in October, we would not have overthrown the power of the bourgeoisie and, consequently, we would not have been able to complete the bourgeois revolution.

That is why the completion of the bourgeois revolution cannot be set up against the strategic slogan of the second stage of the revolution, the purpose of which was to guarantee the seizure of power by the proletariat.

There is only one way to avoid all these "contradictions," namely, to admit that there is a fundamental difference between the strategic slogan of the first stage of the revolution (the bourgeois-democratic revolution) and the strategic slogan of the second stage of the revolution (the proletarian revolution) and to admit that in the first stage of the revolution we marched together with the *whole* peasantry for the bourgeois-democratic revolution, while in the second stage of the revolution we marched together with the *poorest* peasantry against the power of capitalism and for the proletarian revolution. It is essential to admit this, because an analysis of the class

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forces in the first and second stages of the revolution obliges us to do so. Otherwise it would be impossible to explain the fact that until February 1917 we carried on our work under the slogan of a revolutionary-*democratic* dictatorship of the proletariat and the *peasantry*, while after February, 1917 this slogan was replaced by the slogan of the *socialist* dictatorship of the proletariat and the *poorest* peasantry. Confess, Comrade Yan—sky, that the substitution of one slogan by another in March and April 1917 cannot be explained by your scheme.

This fundamental difference between the two strategic slogans of the Party was pointed out by Lenin in his pamphlet *Two Tactics*. He formulated the slogan of the Party during the period of preparation of the bourgeois-democratic revolution as follows:

> "The proletariat must carry out to the end the democratic revolution, and in this unite to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush by force the resistance of the autocracy and to paralyze the instability of the bourgeoisie." (*Cf.* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. VIII, "Two Tactics, etc," Chap. 12.)

In other words: together with the whole peasantry against the autocracy, with the bourgeoisie neutralized, for a democratic revolution.

The slogan of the Party in the period of preparation for the socialist revolution he formulated as follows:

> "The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution and in this unite to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population in order to crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyze the instability of the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie." (*Ibid.*)

In other words: together with the poorest peasantry and the semi-proletarian sections of the population in general, against the bourgeoisie—the petty bourgeoisie in town and country being neutralized —for the socialist revolution.

That was in 1905.

In April, 1917, Lenin, describing the then existing political situation as an interweaving of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry with the actual power of the bourgeoisie, said:

> The peculiarity of the present situation in Russia is that it represents a transition from the *first** stage of the revolution, which because of the inadequate organization and insufficient class consciousness of the proletariat, handed power to the bourgeoisie—to its

* My italics.—*J. S.*

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second stage, which is to place power in the hands of the proletariat and the *poorest* strata of the peasantry." (*Cf.* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XX, "The April Theses.")

Towards the end of August, 1917, when the preparations for the October Revolution were in full swing, Lenin, in an article entitled "The Peasants and the Workers," wrote as follows:

"Only the proletariat and the *peasantry* * could overthrow the monarchy—that, in accordance with the times [*i.e.*, 1905—*J.S.*], was the fundamental statement of our class policy. And this statement was correct. February and March 1917 proved this again.

"Only the proletariat, leading the *poorest peasantry* * (the semi-proletarians, as our program calls them) can end the war with a democratic peace, can heal its wounds, can begin to make the absolutely necessary and urgent steps towards socialism—this is the present statement of our class policy." (*Cf.* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXI, Part I, "The Peasants and the Workers.")

That should not be understood to mean that we have a dictatorship of the proletariat *and* the poorest peasantry *now*. That, of course, is not so. We marched towards October under the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poorest peasantry and in October achieved it formally, inasmuch as we had a *bloc* with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and shared the leadership with them, although actually the dictatorship of the proletariat already existed, since we Bolsheviks constituted the majority. However, the dictatorship of the proletariat *and* the poorest peasantry ceased to exist formally after the Left Socialist-Revolutionary *putsch*, after the rupture of the *bloc* with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, when the leadership passed *completely and entirely* into the hands of *one* party, into the hands of our Party, which does not share, and must not share the guidance of the State with any other party. This is what we mean by the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Finally, in November, 1918, Lenin, casting a retrospective glance along the path the revolution had followed, wrote:

"Yes, our revolution is a bourgeois revolution *as long as* we march *together with* the peasantry as a whole. That we realized absolutely clearly; we stated it a hundred and a thousand times in 1905; we never attempted to skip this essential phase of the historical process nor to abolish it by decrees. . . . But in 1917, from the month of *April, long before the October Revolution and before we seized power*, we openly said and explained to the people: now the revolution cannot stop there; for the country has gone ahead, capitalism has moved on, ruin has reached unparalleled dimensions, which will *demand* (whether they like it or not), will demand that

* My italics.—*J. S.*

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steps be taken toward socialism. For there was *no* other way of moving forward, no other way of saving the country racked by war, and no other way of relieving the sufferings of the toilers and exploited. And it turned out just as we had foretold. The course of revolution confirmed the correctness of our arguments. *At first*, together with *all* the peasantry against the monarchy, against the landlords, against medievalism (and to that extent the revolution remained bourgeois, bourgeois-democratic). *Then*, together with the poorest peasantry, together with the semi-proletariat, together with all the exploited, *against capitalism*, including the *rural rich, the kulaks and the speculators*, and to that extent the revolution becomes a *socialist* revolution." (*C.f.* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIII, "The Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky".)

As you see Lenin repeatedly pointed out how profound was the difference between the first strategic slogan of the period of preparation for the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the second strategic slogan of the period of preparation for the October Revolution. The first slogan was: *together with the whole peasantry* against the autocracy; the second slogan: *together with the poorest peasantry* against the bourgeoisie.

The fact that the completion of the bourgeois revolution dragged on for a whole period after October and that since we were completing the bourgeois revolution the "whole" peasantry could not but sympathize with us, does not, as I said above, in the least disturb the fundamental postulate that we moved towards October and triumphed in October together with the *poorest peasantry*, that we overthrew the power of the bourgeoisie and set up the dictatorship of the proletariat (one of the tasks of which was to complete the bourgeois revolution) together with the *poorest peasantry* and against the resistance of the kulaks (also peasants) and the vacillations of the middle peasantry.

That is clear, I think.

3. You write further in your letter:

"Is the assertion true that '*we arrived at October* under the slogan of an *alliance with the rural poor and the neutralization of the middle peasant*'? No, it is not true. For the reasons mentioned above, and from the quotations from Lenin, it will be seen that this slogan could arise only when 'the class division within the peasantry had matured' (Lenin), *i.e.*, in the summer and autumn of 1918."

It follows from this quotation that the Party adopted the policy of neutralizing the middle peasant not in the period of preparation for October and during October, but after October, and particularly after 1918, after the setting up of the Committees of Poor Peasants. That is *absolutely untrue*, Comrade Yan—sky. On the contrary, the policy of neutralizing the middle peasant did not begin,

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but *ended* after the setting up of the Committees of Poor Peasants, after 1918. The policy of neutralizing the middle peasant was *abandoned* (and not introduced) after 1918. It was after 1918, in March, 1919, that Lenin, opening the Eighth Congress of our Party, stated:

> "The best representatives of socialism of the old days—when they still believed in revolution and served it in theory and ideology—spoke of the neutralization of the peasantry, *i.e.*, of transforming this middle peasantry into a social stratum, which, if it did not actively aid the revolution of the proletariat, at least would not hinder our work, would remain neutral and would not take the side of our enemies. This abstract, theoretical statement of the task is perfectly clear to us. *But it is not enough.** We have entered a *phase of socialist construction** in which we must draw up concrete and detailed basic rules and instructions which have been tested by the experience of our work in the rural districts, by which we must guide ourselves in order to achieve a *stable alliance* with the middle peasantry." (*Cf.* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, "Speech at the Opening of the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party [Bolsheviks].")

As you see, this is something directly contrary to what you say in your letter. You turn our *actual* Party practice upside down by confusing the *beginning* of neutralization with its *end*.

The middle peasant whined and vacillated between revolution and counter-revolution as long as the bourgeoisie was being overthrown and as long as the Soviet power was not consolidated; therefore it was necessary to neutralize him. The middle peasant began to turn towards us when he began to convince himself that the bourgeoisie had been overthrown "for good," that the Soviet power was being consolidated, that the kulak was being overcome and that the Red Army was beginning to triumph on the fronts of the civil war. And it was after such a change that the third strategic slogan of the Party, announced by Lenin at the Eighth Party Congress, became possible, namely, with the support of the poor peasants and by establishing a stable alliance with the middle peasants, to march forward towards socialist construction.

How could you have forgotten this well-known fact?

It further follows from your letter that the policy of neutralizing the middle peasant during the *transition* toward the proletarian revolution and in the *first days* after the triumph of that revolution is incorrect, unsuitable and therefore unacceptable. This is *absolutely wrong*, Comrade Yan—sky. Just the contrary is the case. It is precisely while the power of the bourgeoisie is being overthrown

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* My italics.—*J.S.*

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and until the power of the proletariat is consolidated that the middle peasant vacillates and resists most of all. And it is precisely at this period that alliance with the poor peasant and neutralization of the middle peasant are essential.

Persisting in your error, you assert that the question of the peasantry is of great importance not only for our country, but also for other countries "which more or less resemble the economic system of pre-October Russia." The latter statement is, of course, true. But this is what Lenin said in his *Theses on the Agrarian Question* at the Second Congress of the Comintern regarding the policy of proletarian parties towards the middle peasant in the period when power is seized by the proletariat. After defining the poorest peasantry, or more precisely, "the toiling and exploited masses of the countryside," as a separate group consisting of agricultural laborers, semi-proletarians, or dwarf peasants and small peasants, and proceeding to deal with the question of the middle peasantry as a separate group in the rural districts, Lenin said:

> "In the economic sense the term 'middle peasantry' applies to small husbandmen, who also possess, either by right of ownership or by lease, small plots of land, but such that under capitalism, as a rule, provide not only modest support for the family and the farm, but also the possibility of obtaining a certain surplus, which, at least in good years, is capable of being transformed into capital, and who fairly frequently resort to the hire of the labor power of others. . . . The revolutionary proletariat cannot set itself the aim—at least *in the immediate future and in the early period of the dictatorship of the proletariat*—of winning the adherence of this section. *It must confine itself to the task of neutralizing it, i.e.*, inducing it not to offer active support to the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the proletariat." (*Cf. Stenographic Report of the Second Congress of Comintern* [Russian,] pp. 610-11.)

How, after this, can it be asserted that the policy of neutralizing the middle peasant arose only "in the summer and autumn of 1918," *i.e.*, after the decisive successes achieved in the consolidation of the power of the soviets, the power of the proletariat?

As you see, the question of the strategic slogan of proletarian parties at the moment of transition to the socialist revolution and the consolidation of the power of the proletariat, as well as the question of the neutralization of the middle peasant, are not so simple as you imagine.

4. From all that has been said above it is clear that the quotations from the works of Lenin cited by you cannot be opposed to the basic slogan of our Party in the second stage of the revolution, since these quotations (a) deal, not with the basic slogan of the Party *prior to* October, but with the completion of the bourgeois revolution *after*

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October and (b) they do not refute, but confirm the correctness of that slogan. I have already mentioned above, and am obliged to repeat, that the strategic slogan of the Party in the second stage of the revolution, in the period *prior to* the seizure of power by the proletariat, the chief theme of which is the question of power, cannot be set up in opposition to the task of completing the bourgeois revolution, which is effected in the period *following* the seizure of power by the proletariat.

5. You speak of the well-known article by Comrade Molotov in *Pravda*, entitled "The Bourgeois Revolution in Our Country" (March 12, 1927), which it appears "induced" you to apply to me for an explanation. I do not know how you read articles, Comrade Yan—sky. I, too, have read Comrade Molotov's article and do not think that it in any way contradicts what I said in my report to the Fourteenth Congress of our Party on the slogans of our Party regarding the peasantry. In his article, Comrade Molotov does not deal with the basic slogan of the Party in the period of October, but with the fact that, inasmuch as the Party after October, completed the bourgeois revolution, it enjoyed the sympathy of the peasants. But I have already stated above that the recognition of this fact does not refute, but on the contrary confirms the correctness of the fundamental postulate that we overthrew the power of the bourgeoisie and established the dictatorship of the proletariat together with the poorest peasantry, the middle peasant being neutralized, and against the bourgeoisie of town and country, and that but for that, we would not have completed the bourgeois revolution.

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Notes on the Economic Crisis

By JOHN IRVING and PHIL MAYER

(*Labor Research Association*)

THE blatant hypocrisy that currently fills the bourgeois press about "returning business confidence" and of which we spoke in the preceding issue of *The Communist* is intended to conceal two very unpleasant facts concerning the present status of the crisis. First, that it is only through the continuous support from the government that American "private business enterprise" has been capable of anything like sustained activity. The "priming of the pump" has come to be the major source of the flow of business. Secondly, that the Roosevelt government has no intention of mitigating the misery of America's working masses through a comprehensive system of social insurance.

We need not reiterate here what may be read in the daily press, that the vaunted "autumn improvement" in business did not materialize, that unemployment is increasing, that by all tokens, as well as official admissions, relief rolls this year will be the largest since the onset of the crisis.

The statistics for November* that are now (December 15) becoming available substantiate our earlier analysis. The *Annalist* index of business activity remains for November substantially at the level of October (70.9 and 70.6 respectively). Employment and payrolls for New York State were lower in November than they were in October. The figures for the country at large are not yet available, but those of New York State have in the past fairly reflected the situation for the entire country.

We shall not, therefore, at this time elaborate on the various other indices which measure the degree of stagnation into which American industry has fallen and on the increasing mass misery which this state of affairs implies. What we wish to emphasize here is the fact that it is in the face of this intensification of mass misery that Roosevelt has now definitely turned his back even on his own

*All tables are omitted this month. Figures were not available before *The Communist* "deadline".

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demagogic promise to recommend legislation for social insurance. In the face of these facts he kicked in the chin the assemblage of his own followers whom he had invited to Washington to advise him on a program of social insurance. He chose, instead, to support a program of relief that must increase mass misery through a further lowering of the standard of living of the majority of wage-workers, as well as multiply the capitalist contradictions which are basic causes of capitalist crises.

For what else is this "billion dollar* works program" that is "being discussed" by Roosevelt and his advisers, but a series of capitalist contradictions upon which economic crises thrive? In brief, this is a three-fold program: First and foremost, it aims at substituting a works dole for the present relief dole—that becomes at the same time a substitute for a permanent program of unemployment insurance. Secondly, it aims at advancing on a large scale the pauperizing subsistence farm. This, among other things, by decentralizing the unemployed by scattering them into rural communities, at the same time reinforcing their present petty-bourgeois ideology with a layer of petty homestead ownership, is intended to weaken the growing solidarity and militancy of the urban proletariat. And thirdly, comes the housing and slum-clearing phase of the program. This is intended to give work to "millions" as well as lower rents. Taken together these three projects are to carry us over the perilous times during which "private capital and initiative" will be pulling us out of the "depression".

Obviously to the extent that a works program of the scale contemplated is "successful", to that extent it is self-defeating. The program does not, of course, envisage paying the prevailing wages to those to whom it will give work. This means lowering the general wage level all along the line. As if a warning of intent, only a few days before this contemplated works program was announced, F.E.R.A. declared it to be its purpose to lower the wages of employees on its projects below the 30 cents an hour scale so as to minimize competition with private industry! It thus becomes merely a matter of arithmetic to prove that no matter what the wage level is that public works establishes below that prevailing in private industry, it must before long reduce the wages paid in private industry to its own public works level, and then in turn fall still lower so as "not to compete with private industry". Increasing mass poverty becomes inevitable, and with it decreasing production and increasing mass unemployment.

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* At first it was "12 billion dollars"; a month later it became "8 to 9 billion dollars", and now, December 16 (*New York Times*), it has shrunk to "2 billions."

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Subsistence farming must cut two ways. If developed along the Ford idea, a subsidiary to industrial employment, subsistence farming becomes a means of subsidizing the lowered wage scales of the local industries. Total family earnings, and, therefore, the family standard of living, declines. The spread between earnings of the workers and their industrial output widens and industry must gradually slacken—perhaps even to a standstill.

In the second place, to the extent that "subsistence farmers", hundreds of thousands of them—a "million" is the claim of the more sanguine government officials—actually manage to produce the greater portion of their own food needs, to that extent they cease to be consumers of the output of the legitimate farmers—with the obvious consequences—the legitimate farmer will soon have to become a subsistence farmer.

Finally, the housing program, outside of enriching the present owners of slum areas, can prove but a boomerang. Unless housing becomes a public service, a function of a nation-wide, all-comprehensive system of social insurance (of course completely out of the question in capitalist society for that would entail the displacement of the private landlord and real estate dealer) a housing program such as is held out by Relief Administrator Hopkins (and Secretary Ickes), one that would provide $5 per room quarters for the mass of urban workers, means the destruction of thirty billions of real estate equities—ownership, mortgages, bonds, etc. It means the bankruptcy of most insurance companies, savings banks, building and loan associations; private investors in real estate. Of this the Roosevelt administration is fully aware, and will do nothing that will in any way threaten to bring about such eventualities. The Roosevelt "housing program" becomes therefore one more example of his administration's demagogic promises.

And that is not all. The raising of the billions of dollars contemplated by this program can become but one more link in the chain of government financing which leads to inflation of the currency.

This program for a long time to come cannot be self-liquidating, that is, it cannot pay for itself. But whether self-liquidating or not, for the time being huge sums of money will have to be raised, and it is not contemplated to raise these moneys through taxation but through government borrowing; that is, through issuing government bonds. And government bonds now clog the portfolios of the banks and insurance companies to suffocation. The public cannot take them, as bonds. But government bonds can be used as a basis for issuing new currency and this can be passed on to the public. Thus the public will be fed new currency which is

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backed by bonds which have no backing. Therein lies the added danger of inflation.

The shrinking of the original program from twelve billion to two billion dollars in a matter of two months testifies to the lying insincerity of this as of all the Roosevelt programs to mitigate the misery of the masses, as well as to the panicky confusion of his advisers in trying to find a way out of the crisis. For the moment all there is in store for the unemployed is another C.W.A. makeshift, under another name, perhaps, but the same purpose: to allay with a crumb the seething discontent of millions. This they will get unless they struggle for a broad program of social insurance such as will be written by the National Congress for Unemployment and Social Insurance that is gathering on a widest possible united front to meet in Washington during the first week in January.

* * *

For the immediate future American capitalism together with world capitalism must steel itself to withstand, if it cannot stave off, a new shock, in the form of a threatened collapse of the Belgian and French national economies. The cumulative results of several years of contraction of Belgium's exports, due chiefly to the imposition of foreign tariffs and quotas, as well as to the depreciation of the currencies of the off-gold countries (Belgium is still on a gold basis) have been such as to reduce the purchasing power of her workers to incomparably low levels. This has meant contraction of her domestic as well as foreign trade, and domestic prices have continued to decline, so that last October they stood at 67.3 compared with 123.9 in 1929. While in the off-gold countries, commodity prices have recovered from their depression lows, due to the inflationary tendencies engendered by abandoning the gold standard, commodity prices in Belgium have continued downward. It is only with the help of Holland bankers and the Bank of France that Belgium has remained on the gold standard in recent weeks. But in spite of this assistance from the other members of the "gold bloc", it may be a matter only of days before Belgium, too, will be forced off gold (and that would mean dragging France and possible Holland along with her). Unless, of course, she can reduce wages and salaries to such further extent as to place her in a renewed competitive advantage in foreign trade in spite of the devaluation of the currencies of the off-gold countries.

The crisis in France is intimately tied up with that of Belgium through the interlacing of their financial interests, and the general economic situation there is growing worse. A dispatch to the *New York Times*, dated Paris, December 15, states that unemployment in France is increasing "at an accelerated pace", and while it is

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already unprecedented in extent, it is expected to increase by another 25 per cent within the next two months. "The anxiety which the situation is arousing can be understood," is the correspondent's comment. Price deflation continues and the production index is going down. Bankruptcies have reached an all-time record.

The shock that will be felt by countries such as England and the United States, that are off the gold standard, should France also be forced off gold, will be more far-reaching than may be implied in the possibilities of a "war" of international currencies: The shock that such an event must administer to the artificially stimulated "business confidence" of these two countries will be the more devastating. Much of the vaunted "business confidence" that is to bring us back "prosperity" is predicated on the idea of stabilization of international currencies. This would all be upset by this new development. Furthermore, this added proof of the universal bankruptcy of world capitalism will be hard to explain away to the toilers in the present stage of revolutionary upsurge.

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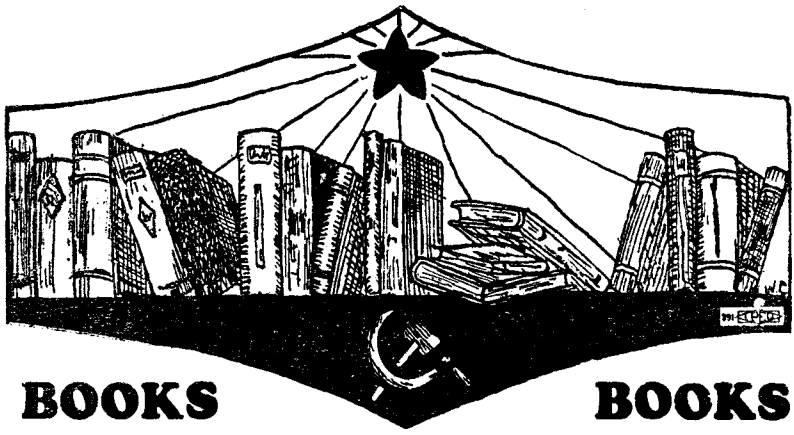

FORGING THE WEAPON OF PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

Reviewed by H. M. WICKS

Collected Works of V. I. Lenin, 8 *volumes. International Publishers.* $8.00.

IN the eight-volume edition of Lenin's works issued on the occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the founding of International Publishers there is one thing that is always emphasized—the organization and development of the Party of the proletarian revolution. The two volumes covering the Iskra period, the volume entitled *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, the book on the Imperialist War, and the four volumes dealing with the mighty onrush of the revolutionary crisis of 1917 up to the day of the seizure of power by the proletariat of Russia under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party—in all these is seen the implacable fight that Lenin led against everybody and everything that threatened to impede the building of the Party, "a Party of iron which has been tempered in the struggle, a Party that enjoys the confidence of all the straightforward members of the working class, a Party able to understand and influence the psychology of the masses".

These eight volumes contain most of the writings of Lenin that have long since become classics. There are, besides the better known works, literally hundreds of short articles, speeches, resolutions, theses, and reports covering the entire range and extent of the political and economic life in the imperialist and colonial world. In these volumes can be found invaluable material on subjects ranging from the mechanical equipment for producing propaganda leaflets, small papers, etc., to the most complicated questions of dialectic materialism. No one can read Lenin without being impressed with his mastery of the art of presenting in plain, understandable language, the most penetrating scientific analysis of the subjects under discussion. As early as the Iskra period (1900-1902) Lenin set for himself the rule of never forgetting that:

> ". . . members of a militant Socialist party must in their scientific works keep the working class reader in mind, must strive to write *simply* without employing the unnecessary clever turns of phrase, and those outer symptoms of 'erudition' which so captivate the decadent and acknowledged representatives of official science". (*Iskra Period*, Vol. I, p. 223.)

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Let no one imagine, however, that Lenin meant by this to indulge in the abominable practice of discussing revolutionary problems in a semi-literate way, as is sometimes done by some of the intelligentsia who come into the movement and imagine they have to "talk down" to their readers. Such an attitude reveals a contempt for the workers and lack of faith in their ability to develop theoretical leaders. This sort of thing Lenin treated with contempt and held that "attention must be devoted *principally* to the task of *raising* the workers to the level of revolutionists, but without, in doing so, necessarily *degrading* ourselves to the level of the 'labor masses' ". Lenin said:

> "I am far from denying the necessity of popular literature for the workers, and especially popular (but, of course, not vulgar) literature for the especially backward workers. But what annoys me is that pedagogics are confused with questions of politics and organization. You, gentlemen, who talk so much about the 'average worker', as a matter of fact, rather insult the workers by your desire to *talk down* to them, to stoop to them while discussing labor politics or labor organization. Talk about serious things in a serious manner; leave pedagogics to the pedagogues, and not to politicians and to organizers!" ("What Is to Be Done?" *Iskra Period*, Vol. II, p. 204.)

Thus, in his earliest work, Lenin followed the practice of so presenting his arguments that they were understandable to the masses and at the same time enabled the workers who read his work to improve their own understanding of their class position and problems.

From the first, Lenin resisted with all his power the attempts of all those in the Party who tried to impose upon it ideas carried over from a hostile class. His polemic against the "economists" in "What Is to Be done?" is a masterpiece that theoretically annihilates those who tried to degrade Social-Democratic (read Communist today) politics to trade union politics and "prepare the ground for converting the labor movement into an instrument of bourgeois democracy". That work is a masterpiece of Marxian analysis that traces the anti-working class ideas of the economists to their source and shows the bourgeois forms into which they degenerate. Certainly no one can read that work without being convinced of the necessity of waging a relentless struggle against all those who attempt to divert the movement from the revolutionary path into channels that could only result in aiding the enemy class. Lenin realized that all such ideas had to be liquidated before it was possible to proceed with the work of building a mass proletarian Party, led by professional revolutionists.

In "What Is to Be Done?" Lenin not only pillories theories hostile to the development of a revolutionary mass Party, but he takes up in great detail the organizational measures necessary to accomplish the task. In the first place, he demands the establishment of an all-Russian newspaper as the most effective way of training strong political organizations, capable of combining all the forces and "leading the movement *not only in name* but in deed, *i.e., that will be ready at any moment to support every protest and every outbreak*, and to utilize these for the purpose of increasing and strengthening the militant forces required for decisive battle". Thus the Leninist conception of the Party as the highest form of organization of the working class; and a central newspaper that can answer the pressing questions which arise in the course of struggle, a medium through which contacts can be established with the

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toiling masses in all parts of the country. Through such a medium all the local struggles could be made consciously to contribute to the consolidation of the general movement. Such a newspaper, said Lenin, "would become part of an enormous pair of smith's bellows that would blow every spark of the class struggle and popular indignation into a general conflagration". It is in this work that Lenin's now world-famous demand that a paper be not only a collective agitator and propagandist, but a collective organizer, was first enunciated. Of such a paper Lenin stated:

> "Around what is in itself very innocent and very small, but in the full sense of the word a regular and *common cause*, an army of tried warriors would systematically gather and receive their training. On the ladders and scaffolding of this general organizational structure there would soon ascend Social-Democratic Zhelyabovs* from among our revolutionists and Russian Bebels from among our workers who would take their place at the head of the mobilized army and rouse the whole people to settle accounts with the shame and the curse of Russia." (*Iskra Period*, Vol. II, p. 240.)

The volume, *The Imperialist War*, follows consistently the line laid down in the earliest writings of Lenin. He who had been the most relentless fighter for revolutionary Marxism stood, at the outbreak of the imperialist war, at the head of the one consistent Marxist Party. It was Lenin alone who held aloft the banner of revolutionary Marxism from the very beginning of the war. Lenin proved that the infamous betrayal by the leaders of the Second International at the outbreak of the war was the inevitable culmination of the opportunist policies they had pursued for years. He showed that the opportunists, instead of using legal bourgeois opportunities in a revolutionary way, degenerated into servile worshippers of capitalist class legalism; that the Parties were dominated by a thin layer of bureaucrats from the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie and by elements from the aristocracy of the working class; the outbreak of the war saw the development of opportunism to social-chauvinism; the secret alliance of the opportunists with their own capitalist governments became an open one.

In his writings and speeches on the imperialist war Lenin mercilessly excoriated the avowed social-patriots of the caliber of Renaudel, Scheidemann, Guesde, Henderson, and unmasked the hypocritical Centrists of the type of Kautsky, whose capitulation to the warmongers assumed a particularly repulsive and disgusting form. For sustained polemics, masterful in political content, the writings of Lenin on the role of the social-patriots in the imperialist war can be compared only to Marx's *Civil War in France* and his *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. Just as Marx erected a monument of shame to Bonaparte and to Thiers, Favre & Co., so Lenin did likewise to the "heroes of the Second International".

The volume on imperialist war also contains Lenin's appraisal of Trotzky and exposes the latter's miserable social-chauvinist slogan of 1915: "Neither Victory Nor Defeat". At the outbreak of the war Lenin raised the revolutionary Marxist slogan of turning the imperialist war into a civil war against capitalism, and declared that every revolutionist must tirelessly fight to bring

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* Zhelyabov was the leader of the Russian revolutionary organization, the "Narodnaya Volya" (People's Freedom), who was executed by the Tsar's government in 1881.

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about the defeat of his own imperialist government. It was against this slogan that Trotzky raised his "neither victory nor defeat" shibboleth. This vapid phrase-mongering of Trotzky and one of his supporters, Bukvoyed, drew the following comment from Lenin:

> "If Bukvoyed and Trotzky had done some thinking, they would have realized that *their* point of view is that of a war *of the governments and the bourgeoisie, i.e.*, that they pay homage to the 'political methodology of social-patriotism', to use Trotzky's affected language.
>
> "Those who stand for the 'neither victory nor defeat' slogan are in fact on the side of the bourgeoisie and the opportunists, since they 'do not believe' in the possibility of international revolutionary actions of the working class against its governments, and since they *do not wish* to help the development of such actions, this, though undoubtedly difficult, being the only Socialist task worthy of a proletarian."

Likewise, Lenin pilloried the Trotzkyist slogan of a "United States of Europe", showing that such a slogan "on the present-day economic basis, that is to say, under capitalism", would mean "an organization of reaction". Then, as now, Trotzky took the anti-Marxist position that the victory of Socialism in one country is impossible. Lenin showed how such a slogan as the "United States of Europe" would be incorrect because "it could be erroneously interpreted to mean that the victory of Socialism is one country is impossible". *The Imperialist War* contains such valuable historical material as the documents in connection with the conferences of the Zimmerwald group, the comments in articles and speeches of Lenin on the Zimmerwaldians, and the demand for the formation of a Third International based upon the revolutionary traditions of Marx and Engels. In this work Lenin showed that he had mastered in every detail the revolutionary theory and practice of Marx and Engels. To him Marxism was not something to be acknowledged in phrases but something to be applied, as Engels puts it in his *Feuerbach*, "in reality to each particular set of conditions which comes up for examination". It was not a dogma, but a guide to action, for Lenin, as it must be for all who are revolutionists in fact and not in phrase.

It was Georg Ledebour who, at one of the Zimmerwald conferences, said: "It is all right for Lenin to talk about violent overthrow of 'his' imperialist government, but what would he do were he in Russia?"

Lenin, at the head of the victorious Party of the October Revolution, wrote the answer to that question so large and so decisively that it will never be effaced from the memory of man.

Four volumes, two entitled *The Revolution of* 1917, and two, *Toward the Seizure of Power*, contain everything in the way of writings, speeches, and documents leading up to the October victory.

In those volumes we see the guiding hand of revolutionary genius at the head of that Party of Iron which Lenin began to forge years before in the Iskra period. Therein we see brought into action the Party as the unifying force, directing into one common revolutionary channel all the manifold discontent, forging into one mighty, irresistible movement the local struggles and risings, rallying the peasant masses as allies of the proletariat, winning the masses of soldiers and sailors, "storming the heavens".

And at every stage of the struggle we see Lenin still waging the indomitable fight to keep the Party free of all hesitations and vacillations; sometimes fighting lone-handed for his position.

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No one can read these volumes without fully appreciating the fact that Lenin not only rescued Marxism from the swamp of opportunism and social-chauvinism into which it had been dragged by the leaders of the Second International, but that he developed it further, deepened it, rendered it more concrete in accordance with the needs of the working class in the epoch of proletarian revolutions.

To read these volumes is to appreciate thoroughly the definition of Leninism put forth by Lenin's best disciple, who has further developed the teachings of Lenin and who is carrying out today at the head of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. and the Communist International, the revolutionary program of Marxism-Leninism. Comrade Stalin thus defines Leninism:

> "Leninism is the Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and of the proletarian revolution. To be more precise: Leninism is the theory and tactic of the proletarian revolution in general, and the theory and tactic of the dictatorship of the proletariat in paricular."

Besides the writings thus far indicated in this attempt to give some picture of so massive a work, there is contained in *The Imperialist War* an article entitled "Karl Marx" which deals with the world conception—dialectic materialism—and the economic doctrines of Marx. In the same volume appears "The Collapse of the Second International". In Book II of *Toward the Seizure of Power* we have Lenin's classic "State and Revolution", invaluable for a thorough understanding of the role of the capitalist State, the conquest of power, the transitional character of the proletarian State, the lower and higher phases in the organization of Communist society.

By bringing out these eight volumes, International Publishers has again rendered a marked service to the working class movement. There will soon be more volumes of the same set. It is necessary that there be published as soon as possible the works of Lenin in the period from 1902 to 1914—especially his writings and speeches on the events leading up to, during, and following the revolution of 1905.

Incorporated in the eight volumes, however, is Lenin's masterly work, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1908), in which, in the realm of philosophy, he not only annihilated the idealism and eclecticism of Bogdanov and others engaged in "god seeking" and "god building", but reaffirmed and developed further the materialistic dialectics of Marx.

International Publishers are to be congratulated for having incorporated in all the books elaborate explanatory notes which give the student a complete history of events referred to in the text, as well as biographical notes dealing with the personages who participated in these events.

The low price at which these books are available should assure their distribution on a very wide scale. That the set has met with enthusiastic response is seen from the many reports that Party units and other organizations are buying them as the basis for building small Marxist-Leninist libraries.

Certainly by reading these works the Party members will have a better understanding of the necessity of building a Leninist mass Party that will be capable of standing at the head of the toiling masses of this country who are unmistakeably advancing toward revolution in a world that is again on the threshold of a revolutionary crisis as it was when Lenin, at the head of the Party he organized and guided, led the working class in alliance with the peasantry to smash the power of capitalism in Russia, and set up the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

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"... *what is new now in pursuing united front tactics is not that we are changing the appraisal in principle of one or another form of the united front, but that we are much more persistent, bolder and more flexible in operating these tactics, that we fight to the utmost to spread them, and that we are starting a determined offensive against Social-Democratic leaders and trade union bureaucrats who sabotage the united front of struggle.*" (O. Piatnitsky.)

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